# CHRISTIANITY AND AMUSEMENTS

RICHARD HENRY EDWARDS

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EMPHASIS is placed on a formative ideal, a constructive method, and a positive program. The purpose of this book is to discover the degree to which the spiritual welfare of the people is molded by their amusement life, and the degree to which Christianity is able to remold their amusements.

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# CHRISTIANITY AND AMUSEMENTS

By
RICHARD HENRY EDWARDS
*Secretary for Social Study and Service*
*Student Young Men's Christian Associations*

LIBRARY OF
Southern Methodist University
DALLAS, TEXAS

WITHDRAWN

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TO MY WIFE

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# INTRODUCTION

Recreation is a phase of human experience universal in its interest, and has been rightly grouped with work and living conditions as "one of the three great master forces fixing the mundane welfare of human beings." The chief purpose of this book is to discover the degree to which the spiritual welfare of the people also is moulded by their amusement life, and the degree to which, in turn, Christianity is able to remould their amusements. There are many approaches to the subject, any one of which yields fruitage. The approach in this study is through the personal moral questions which are involved in popular forms of amusement.

There is far-reaching wisdom in the words of Henry Churchill King, which may serve to interpret the method of dealing frankly with personal temptations which is here employed.

"It is intellectual vagueness, I believe, which gives the chief danger to many forms of temptation. . . . The temptations are alluring only so long as their real implications are allowed to remain vague in the mind. Let them be fully thought and their power is gone. They will not bear investigation . . . It is doubtless not advice to be followed in our weaker moods; but sometimes the very best cure for these insistent temptations is no longer to seek simply to evade their thought, but to turn a square look at them. In some clear high moment of vision, at a time when one is at his best, let him calmly and clearly face the facts as to these things which he has counted his greatest allurements. Let him turn a telescope on the Sirens and the Lorelei—the telescope of a little clear thinking. They are not so attractive as he has thought; their beauty is false and painted; their smile a leer." [1]

No teacher or student of these pages who realizes the nature of the issues here involved will treat these questions flip-

[1] H. C. King, "Rational Living," p. 131.

pantly. They will rather seek to make every group hour "a clear high moment of vision." Curiosity should never lead students to "investigate" the public places here discussed; the necessary facts can be more effectively secured by other methods.

Constant study of the New Testament, especially the ethical teachings of Jesus, is an essential element in the use of this book. Only as Christian men and women ponder the principles of Jesus in immediate contrast to the actual temptations operative to-day upon countless young people, will the power of Christ to solve their difficulties be revealed. Special reference has been made to the questions of college men and women in the hope that they especially may sense the significance of their attitudes on these questions, and may with others be led to work out for themselves a thorough interpretation of Christian principles.

This book appears at the same time as the author's "Popular Amusements," which presents the outstanding social facts of the main types of public amusement in America, and the organized efforts which are being made to improve conditions. "Popular Amusements" will be found valuable as an accompaniment to this study, as a reference and guide book by group leaders, and in the preparation of topics by students. It contains selected references to the literature of the subject.

Grateful acknowledgment is here made to the members of the Voluntary Study Committee of the Council of North American Student Movements for careful discussion of the manuscript at various stages, and for many constructive personal suggestions; also to other friends who have put me in their debt, especially Mr. George J. Kneeland, Mr. Arthur H. Gleason and Professor C. F. Kent.

CHAPTER I

# THE NATIONAL AMUSEMENT SITUATION

## *The Play Impulse*

All amusements have one starting point—the play impulse in man. However widely they differ, they all trace back to our love of play. What then is play? Whatever one does for the pure love of it—that is play. It is more instinctive than work, and not a whit less important. A playless continent would be no more abnormal than a playless life. Play is for childhood the shining gate that opens wide to life, to sociability, endurance, cooperation, natural growth, and the subordination of one's own desires to common ends. It leads out the youthful spirit through mysterious, instinctive regions where no formal education can be its guide, and may, indeed, light up the meaning of government and the moral order. For maturity, the shining gate swings backward, restoring joyous memories and the early freshness of boyhood's mornings, recreating body and soul, warding off nervous exhaustion, maintaining balance and proportion in life, making work tolerable for the oppressed, and releasing the worker to increased efficiency. Many minds in many centuries have misunderstood or denied the importance of play and looked upon it as a more or less permissible sin rather than as a natural, right, and beautiful expression of the human spirit. This tragic misconception has made the earth a somber place for countless millions. It is well to believe in play, for the love of it leaps up instinctively in every normal being. It is well to believe in play, for morality and play grow up together like joyous children when play is spontaneous, unbought, and clean. America believes in

play: that is manifest. The question at issue is the sort of play in which she believes, the sort of recreations which are to possess her leisure hours. These will shape the national character; these will fashion the morals of her sons and daughters.

## *The National Amusements*

Commercial amusements have now become so popular that their patronage may be said to be universal. One has only to watch the night life of any city as it moves in and out past the box-offices, to see young, middle aged, and old, men, women, and children, of every occupation and station in life, all intent on finding "a good time." Sooner or later the whole city turns out. Amusement enterprises have become indeed a vast business interest, involving enormous investments of capital, occupying much valuable property in the heart of the cities, and receiving huge sums from the earnings of all classes of citizens. Their field of operations extends to every place where a venture can be expected to pay. The ability of so many fake enterprises to make money indicates the openness and gullibility of the public mind, and emphasizes also the dearth of wholesome and attractive offerings. The wide variety of commercial offerings is significant of the amounts of money expended upon them and the intensity of popular desire to hear or see some new thing. Ingenious appeal is made to curiosity and the love of spectacle, to sociability, appetite, and thirst, to sex excitement, antagonism, and many other human desires. Spectacular offerings have been sought out in the remotest corners of the globe, and made to yield their brief moment of stimulation to the ever shifting multitude. Some thriller is provided for every pleasurable sensation known to man.

What are the outstanding national amusements? This is a large and far-reaching question. An answer in briefest outline only can be given here. Popular amusements fall for the most part into five main groups: (1) The Dramatic

Group; (2) The Social Rendezvous Group; (3) The Athletic Group; (4) Special Amusement Places; (5) Special Amusement Events.

(1) The Dramatic Group. Under this general head are included: (a) Serious Drama; (b) Melodrama, Musical Comedy, Farce, and Burlesque; (c) Vaudeville; (d) Motion Pictures, and a few others. They all have this in common, that they involve some sort of dramatic representation before an audience. Attention is invited to the scene presented, and with them all "the play's the thing."

(2) The Social Rendezvous Group. Here are included: (a) Cafés with amusement features, and similar places; (b) Public Dance Halls; (c) Pool Rooms, and similar hang-outs for men. These resorts have this in common, that they bring people together for social intercourse. They variously offer opportunity for eating and drinking, smoking, music, dancing, games, and a certain amount of general sociability. The first and second headings above cover institutions for men and women; the third for men alone.

(3) The Athletic Group. Here are included: (a) Amateur Athletics in all their wide variety; (b) Professional Athletics, the most conspicuous among which are baseball and boxing.

(4) Special Amusement Places. Here we group: (a) Commercial Amusement Parks, such as electric parks, lake, river, and shore resorts, "white cities," and the "midway" of many public parks—all the glittering train of large-scale amusement enterprises which have Coney Island for their dazzling headlight; (b) Race Track Parks devoted to horse racing.

(5) Special Amusement Events. These include chiefly: (a) Holidays and similar celebrations; (b) Excursions and Outings; (c) The Circus; (d) Amusement features of Fairs; (e) Automobile and similar races; (f) Aeroplane Exhibitions and Balloon Ascensions.

It is impossible here to make specific inquiry into the moral character of each of these five groups in their several

phases.[1] We shall consider here only the most significant features in the situation as a whole, in order that we may be the better prepared to understand the concrete personal temptations as they appear in each of these amusement groups in succeeding chapters.

## *Outstanding Features of the Amusement Situation*

Three features characterize the situation to greater or less degree in all its phases. Each has profound significance in the morals of the national life. They are: (1) Professionalism; (2) Commercialism; (3) Immorality.

(1) *Professionalism.* Over against the wholesome love of play, the love of being played upon has become a national passion. The spontaneity of playful activities and the originality which creates them are being lulled to sleep by the habit of being amused. Among great groups of people it is wholly out of date to "make your own fun." Especially where congestion of living conditions and the fatigue of over-work make private recreation difficult for families and friends, the crowds are flocking to the public entertainers. They look on, wistful or jaded, while others do their playing for them. Yet not with these alone has the professional come to dominate the situation. Almost equally with those whose resources for private recreation are ample, the compelling motive is to be amused. The professional entertainer holds sway in every field from which he is not rigidly excluded, and the rights of the amateur are not vigorously asserted. He plays the game better than the rest of us. We pay him to devote his time to it. His work has high social value if he teaches the rest of us how to play the game better and we keep on playing, but when his superiority shames us into inactivity—into merely watching him—we are in a dangerous way. That is what has happened to us, and the line of division between the entertainer and the entertained is an ever-deepening line, save where reassertions of the amateur

[1] See "Popular Amusements" for such a discussion under each phase of the situation.

spirit restrain it. Witness the fact that a handful of motion picture actors are the only acting participants in drama for an estimated twenty millions of Americans every day.[1] The rest are all spectators. The movement for amateur dramatics, encouraging though it be, is only one little note over against the whole orchestra of professionalism.

The circus goes from city to city with its variegated troupe of professionals, intent on one thing only—stirring new thrills of sensation in the largest attainable number of spectators.

Witness again the way in which a handful of professional baseball players play baseball, not merely for the throngs which attend the games, but literally for a nation of fans who follow the games from afar. How many men over thirty years of age in any town could themselves play a game of ball without being laid up for a week?

What proportion of students in any university play on the teams? The rest serve as highly predisposed spectators, as masses of "rooters" who seek, through organized cheering, to alter the course of the game. The resulting situation is described as follows.

"From these conditions arise certain psychic traits of the academic athletic crowd. They center in its extreme partisanship. The moral tone of the emotions is lowered. The finer appreciation of feelings and actions, notably those of the adversary, are suppressed. Violent shouts and epithets give notice that the cave-man is up. Victory must be had. Accordingly semi-professionalism has arisen: and, in spite of repeated regulation, is still widely tolerated. Let not college sports be tainted by commercialism which semi-professionalism implies. Under existing conditions the spectator crowd at an intercollegiate football contest fosters ideals much lower than those suggested by a game of professional baseball." [2]

We have hardly more than begun to create our own com-

[1] W. P. Eaton, "Menace of the Movies," *American Magazine*, September, 1913, V. 76, p. 55.

[2] G. E. Howard, "Social Psychology of the Spectator," *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1912, V. 18.

munity festivals and pageants in which great numbers of the people themselves take part.

The truth of the matter is this: A social disease has been spreading broadcast among us. The professional, whether he be actor, athlete, circus performer, or what not, is the chief source of infection. The disease of *spectatoritis* is abroad in the land. Its germs are in every breath we draw, and most of us are affected with that paralysis of play activities which is its most striking symptom. It rapidly runs its course, deadening the nervous resilience of an individual or a community. Here and there appears the aggravated case, completely infected, the fan who is nothing but a fan—a flabby creature, symbolic of a multitude, a parasite upon the play of others, the least athletic of all men, never playing himself at anything, a spectacle hunter, not a sportsman.

*Spectatoritis,* like the professional who spreads it, depends upon crowds and crowd contagion. The crowd spirit is at work in almost every phase of the amusement problem. Great masses of people, meeting in the highly suggestible state of crowd consciousness, are daily exposed to the professional entertainer, the expert crowd stimulator, who has unique power for "the contagion of virtues and vices in the epidemic of degrading or uplifting suggestions." It is to the infection of these great crowds of people with *spectatoritis* and its deadening effects that we must trace responsibility for the toleration of low standards of dramatic art throughout the nation. Here lies the difficulty in professional athletics, and also in the present system of intercollegiate athletics with such a monstrous provision, for example, as that of the new Yale Bowl, seating 70,000 spectators—a highly educational achievement!

"The spectator crowd at an athletic contest, a football game, a game of baseball, a wrestling or a boxing match, a marathon race, is essentially a theater crowd, except that often it sits in the open air. The members of the spectacle are the only persons who exercise, and their exercise is not

play, but work; often for hire. The vicarious play of the team, however fascinating, does not exercise the spectator's muscles."[1]

*Spectatoritis* is the crowd reaction to professionalism. It must be squarely faced if the amusement problem is to be solved, for its result is brutality and callousness at the loss of human life. We may yet avoid its full manifestations, familiar to other nations, ancient and modern, in established public spectacles of brutality. We are still a long way from the Roman amphitheater and the Spanish bullfight, but *spectatoritis* leads that way. Its way has ever been the path of a jaded sensationalism, and the sensational is the basis of appeal in an alarming proportion of our public amusements. A clear-eyed public opinion must now reckon in advance with its ultimate consequences.

(2) *Commercialism.* Inseparable from the evils of professionalism and *spectatoritis* stands that of commercial domination. The distinguishing difference between the professional and the amateur is the entrance of the money element. It is clear enough that the money element dominates the amusement situation in America. Back of the professional stands the commercial promoter, and the promoter takes his cue from the cash-box every time. He is not seeking chiefly the social welfare. Walter Rauschenbusch has well stated the influence of commercial control in the following: "Pleasure resorts run for profit are always edging along toward the forbidden. Men spend most freely when under liquor or sex excitement; therefore, the pleasure resorts supply them with both. Where profit is eliminated, the quieter and higher pleasures get their chance."

Commercial management has been well characterized as tending to sever the individual from the community, to prefer miscellaneous crowds to neighborly groups, to neglect the interests of the child, and to make no provision aside from moving pictures for the mother of the wage-earning

[1]G. E. Howard, "Social Psychology of the Spectator," *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1912, V. 18, pp. 42–46.

family. Doubtless we would all agree that amusements may be good or bad independent of commercial management, and likewise, that commercial management is apparently necessary and valuable in certain portions of the amusement field. Yet may it not be that the present situation is widely dominated by a type of commercial management which regards neither art nor spontaneity nor the basic demands of morality—a commercialized management? Any careful study of the problem brings one to an affirmative answer to this question.

Let us be wholly just, however, to amusement promoters. There are a considerable number of able men in the "amusement business" who serve society valuably. They explore new fields of human interest. They stake large sums of money on experiments calculated to open some new approach to the social mind, and enlarge the borders of human happiness, with profit, of course, for themselves, but not without benefit to society. The commercial promoter, indeed, often pays the cost of experimentation with the social mind and in effect hands over to society a forged weapon, as in the now accepted use of motion pictures in education.

There are charlatans here, however, as in other forms of business, plenty of them, constituting a large proportion of those engaged: these all stand for the exploitation of human life, not for service. Let us see the amusement exploiter also, just as he is, for he lies in wait for the spirit of youth at every corner. He is not a playful person, nor does he by his enterprises produce a playful people. With him the love of fun in the human heart is a cold matter of dollars and cents. He buys youth's freshness of feeling in return for sundry ticklings of sensation, and blights its glad spontaneities with his itching palm. He turns the pure, upleaping spirit of play into a craze for mere sensation, and coins up with an awful wastage one of the most priceless resources of the race. There follows in his train a jaded company of heavy-eyed, broken people who have lost the spirit of youth and the love of vigorous, wholesome play. The under-

lying fact in the amusement situation is this: certain commercial interests have discovered the natural resource of the play instinct and are exploiting it for gain as ruthlessly as they have exploited other great natural resources. The depleted emotions, the stimulated lust, and the criminal tendencies which they produce by their exploitations cannot be traced back to source with the same deadly accuracy as bleak hillsides and slaughtered stump lots may be laid at the door of ruthless deforestation, but the methods and results are not essentially dissimilar. In no phase of our whole great modern struggle against excessive profits for the few and in favor of human values for the many, is the battle any keener than in this "superficial" question of popular amusements. As the congestion of city life thickens and the daily struggle for a living wage grows sharper, the human need for release through real recreation becomes sharper also. It has, indeed, become for many a desperate need. "Leisure in an industrial city is life itself." The more tragic therefore, becomes the loss of those spiritual values which are crucified by commercialism in association with play. The full significance of commercialized domination is apparent only to those who realize how highly spiritual an expression of human life is made in play. If spontaneous, wholesome, and well-ordered play is a profoundly educative and moralizing force, then the substitution of cold profit-seeking amusements, artificial and often nasty, can but exercise a correspondingly profound effect for demoralization.

Public opinion has before it the task of restoring to all groups of citizens a full opportunity for wholesome recreations untouched by the commercial spirit, and also the parallel task of quickening for them that popular enthusiasm which is now so largely perverted by commercial interests.

(3) *Immorality.* First let us clearly recognize and re-emphasize here the fundamental morality of wholesome play. Every normal human impulse has some normal means of expression. There is no natural impulse to play, dramatic, sociable, athletic or otherwise, which fails to have some

absolutely moral expression. Let us at the outset be free from that whole philosophy of life which looks upon play itself as a more or less permissible sin; for we seek no repression of the instinct of play, but rather its full and rich development. We recognize, likewise, and take for granted throughout our study, the large amount of good which exists in all these groups of public amusements. The recognition of their good, however, will not deter us from a full and fearless study of their evils. Where immorality exists we must know something at least of its hiding places.

A commercial management which is attuned to the cash-box cannot have harmonious morals. Where money is put first, other values get in afterward where they can. The type of morality which puts money ahead of everything else widely characterizes commercial amusements and those who conduct them. Miss Addams goes so far as to write:

"Since the soldiers of Cromwell shut up the people's playhouses and destroyed their pleasure fields, the Anglo-Saxon city has turned over the provision for public recreation to the most evil-minded and the most unscrupulous members of the community." [1]

It has been demonstrated in the recent reports of vice investigations in large cities, such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, that commercial amusement enterprises line both sides of the broad way that leads to the underworld. The Philadelphia Vice Report, for example, declares:

"Many public dance halls, moving picture shows, and other amusement centers, are breeding places of vice—the rendezvous of men who entrap girls and of girls who solicit men. Veritable orgies are described as transpiring in some of the clubs. The proprietors of these places are known to abet these vicious practices, and, in many cases, to derive large revenue from them." [2]

[1] Jane Addams, "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets," p. 7.
[2] "Report of the Vice Commission of Philadelphia," p. 21.

The Chicago Vice Report says:

"The investigation of dance halls, cheap theaters, amusement parks, and lake steamers, shows that these places are surrounded by vicious dangers and temptations which result in sending many young girls into lives of immorality." [1]

Great sections of the amusement problem are found in fact to overlap the vice problem and to form one great series of exploitations by which the vicious and criminal prey upon the innocent, prostituting the natural instinct of pleasure and degrading vast numbers of young people into the life of shame—"confusing joy with lust and gaiety with debauchery."

Julia Schoenfeld summarizes her impressions of an investigation of New York conditions as follows:

"It was discouraging after many weeks of going about to see the same characteristics, the same pitfalls, the same snares for all. Young girls do not willingly walk into danger. Girls are everywhere and danger lurks everywhere. Girls from good homes, girls who live in boarding houses, girls from the tenements, girls who must content themselves in hall bedrooms, girls of all ages, all in the mad pursuit of pleasure, running headlong into danger, having their moral senses blunted—all because the people of New York are willing to let any kind of amusement exist under any conditions, are willing to sit by and let politicians graft. By their very indifference to public welfare they are helping along the great curse that is besetting the American public to-day—the Social Evil." [2]

A significant chart is presented in the Kansas City Survey of Commercial Recreation by Fred F. McClure (p. 73):

"After noting the maturity and impressionability of the attendants at various kinds of commercial amusements, and listing carefully the objectionable features of each kind, the

[1] "The Social Evil in Chicago," p. 246.

[2] From an unpublished report on amusement resorts by Julia Schoenfeld.

following rating of the different kinds of amusements in proportion to their moral worth is submitted as representing an opinion based on very careful study:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motion Picture Shows | 79 | per | cent | good |
| Theatres | 72 | „ | „ | „ |
| Dance Halls | 23.1 | „ | „ | „ |
| River Excursion Boats | 7.7 | „ | „ | „ |
| Pool Halls | 46.2 | „ | „ | „ |
| Skating Rinks | 74.1 | „ | „ | „ |
| Penny Arcades | 38.5 | „ | „ | „ |
| Shows—"Men Only" | 0 | „ | „ | „ |
| Shooting Galleries | 84.7 | „ | „ | „ |
| Bowling Alleys | 77.1 | „ | „ | „ |
| Amusement Parks | 71.1 | „ | „ | „ |

Medical museums, social clubs, wine gardens, chop suey restaurants, and saloons are not graded. They would undoubtedly lower the average of good, wholesome recreation.

The totals show wholesome amusements 68 per cent; bad, 32 per cent. The 32 per cent consists of intemperance, obscenity, suggestions of crime, dissipation, late hours, representing an expenditure of $1,923,211.99."

It is as yet little realized what a plot the forces of evil have conspired against the young people of the cities. They still start life with moral fiber made of the same essential texture as the youth of the country. The break in that fiber is the result of unbearable strains which a complex of exploitations puts upon it. They are not infrequently exploited in their homes. They are widely exploited in their work, and set to mechanical routine at the age when every natural instinct craves change and fun and shifting interests. In their reactions of fatigue they are caught in the grip of amusement enterprises which are often run with an unbelievable disregard of moral consequences. The filching of their meager earnings is only a little theft compared with the enormity of that robbery by which their spontaneous joy in life, their modesty, and their chastity are plucked away. It is a terrible thing to bring the emotional and

spiritual resources of youth to bankruptcy at twenty-two or twenty-three. The spiritual values of a rich maturity cannot blossom in such lives. The lust for profit has picked open the bud. It is no cause for wonder that youth wilts under the process, that emotional instability is so prevalent, that the age of youth is the age of crime, and that clandestine prostitution appears to grow with appalling rapidity. On the other hand, it is a cause for wonder to all who are close to these young people, that boyish integrity and chivalry last as long as they do, so often victoriously, and that chastity makes so stubborn a fight for its life. If all young people are to have their rightful share of high joy in life, morality must have the utmost reinforcement, for the power of personal morality—the power of the individual to refuse the evil and choose the good—is nowhere more needed than in the hodge-podge of moral confusions which characterizes amusement offerings to-day, often making evil seem attractive and a good life repellent rather than beautiful.

## *A Public Awakening*

The first step in the solution of this problem is a public awakening to the facts of the situation. Only as the full significance of professionalism, commercialism, and immorality in amusements is brought home to the thinking public will reconstructions take place. The charm of home life will then be reestablished, as it must, for it is the stronghold of morality. There can never be any adequate substitute for the home, however long the economic struggle, and however difficult the reconstructions of the social order required to liberate it in city life. An awakened public opinion must see to it in the meantime that a vast amount of organized recreation in the midst of wholesome surroundings is made effective, in order that society may bring to its youth those normal pleasures which make for morality.

The great right-minded public has a fight on against the forces which now control the provision of amusements and

against a small but vicious public which has learned how to get from commercial management what it wants. A fearless campaign for wholesomeness is the immediate need.

"There must be fostered a powerful sentiment in favor of the public support of all proper forms of the newer recreational education. By Nature's law recreative pleasures are essential to sound body, sound mind, sound character, and sound social living. Why suffer them longer to be monopolized for commercial exploitation—often for vicious ends?" [1]

An alert and well-informed public opinion will insist that the amateur shall have his rights, that the cash-box is meant to serve the recreations of the American people, not to rule them, and that the safe-guarding of public morality is the paramount issue in the national life. Only thus will the three outstanding evils of the situation be rectified.

## Daily Readings

1. From early childhood to old age, the spirit of play runs flashing like a mountain brook through the life of man. Tossing free on the hillsides of youth or gently rippling the surface in the lower valleys, it outlasts the journey, brightening all the way. Seldom mentioned in the records of his life, but clearly leaping in the consciousness of Jesus, it stands revealed in his perfect love of children in whose spontaneity and freshness of feeling he rejoiced.

> And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom

[1] G. E. Howard, "Social Psychology of the Spectator," *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1912, V. 18, pp. 42–46.

of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.—Mark 10:13-16.

They are like unto children that sit in the market place, and call one to another; who say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep.—Luke 7:32.

2. The commercialization of any great natural impulse kills freedom and spontaneity of expression. Jesus took drastic action upon those who commercialized the expression of the religious impulses.

And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; and he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers. —Matt. 21:12, 13.

May we not rightly believe that he opposes equally the prostituting of the play impulse?

3. Another servant might have been put into this parable—the man who took the talent and wasted it utterly. How do the allurements of commercialized amusements keep men from using their gifts, or lead them to waste them utterly?

And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things;

enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest.—Matt. 25:20-27.

4. Why is the commercialization of life so dangerous in the thought of Jesus? Where does it focus one's attention? What action commended by Jesus does it make impossible?

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.—Matt. 6:19-21.

5. How different is the attitude of all those who exploit human life for gain from the attitude of Jesus!

And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd.—Matt. 9:35, 36.

Toward which attitude is my life tending?

6. How refreshing is the sound morality of life which Christianity commends in contrast to evil habits prevalent now as in its early days!

Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.—Eph. 6:13-17.

7. And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. —Luke 19:41-44.

What right have we to suppose that Jesus would be moved to grief at immoral conditions in American cities to-day? How do these conditions affect his followers?

## Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

*What is play?*

What is the difference between work and play?

What significance does play have in a human life? In a community?

*What are the national amusements?*

Can you think of any public amusement which cannot be classified under one of the headings given?

*What is the effect of the present amusement situation upon the pure spirit of play?*

In play, how far can one "be amused" or to what extent must one "make his own fun"? Which predominates in present-day play?

Does professionalism destroy play for its own sake?

To what extent does the presence of the spectator destroy the pure spirit of play?

How serious an evil is *spectatoritis?* In how many different ways does it manifest itself in college life?

In what sense do strictly amateur athletics now have the dangers of professional play?

Is the intercollegiate athletic system, represented in a Yale-Harvard football game at the Yale Bowl, likely to be permanent?

How far is commercial management necessary to amusements for all? What are its good features? its bad features?

What is the distinction between commercial management and commercialized management?

In what phases of amusement can commercial management be dispensed with?

Does commercialized management destroy the spontaneous spirit of play?

Which is the greater cause of immoral amusements—commercial exploitation or the popular demand?

In what ways does the amusement problem overlap the vice problem?

Does the great general public like immoral amusements?

*How far can the amusement situation be improved by public opinion? What will be its main points of emphasis?*

CHAPTER II

# THE CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVEMENTS

## *Restrictive Public Opinion*

Public opinion is already active in relation to popular amusements. The exposure of a glaring evil is often followed by an outburst of popular indignation, and this in turn by some form of restrictive action. Such explosions are valuable if they are aimed at the real evil in the case, for they clear the air and reassert the supremacy of moral issues. They demonstrate that the moral sense of the community is opposed to evil when evil is exposed and clearly seen.

Restrictive public opinion aims to correct outstanding abuses, to maintain order and such propriety as can be secured by coercive measures. It does not seek to change the essential character of the amusement with which it deals, but contents itself with such outward control as is necessary to prevent expressions of lawlessness and indecency. Its main weapons are agitation, and governmental regulation secured by executive action, legal prosecution, and increased legislation.

Restrictive public opinion maintains that the worst offenders against public decency can be handled only by the enforcement of adequate laws. It declares that there are staged in America every day shows so vile and corrupting to youth that only arrest and prosecution can reach the responsible person. It declares that in the worst public dance halls there are nameless scenes enacted in the night which society must obliterate by its authorized officers. It cites the effective agitation in California against the Johnson-Jeffries prize-fight, and the present laws in other states as illustrations of what it may

accomplish on that phase of the problem. It declares that the worst of our amusement parks have become the actual summer headquarters and recruiting stations of the organized social evil, which can be cleaned out only by the most rigid repression. It maintains that under the stress of special excitement, evil suggestion, or intoxication, in connection with certain special amusement events, crowds of people often commit acts of brutality which the police alone can stop. It maintains that only the fear of the repressive and regulative agencies of government as established and backed by this type of public opinion, keeps the amusement situation anywhere near as clean as it is in any of its phases.

Doubtless the limitations of restrictive public opinion are many, but it is clearly indispensable, nevertheless. When focused upon the actual evil in the case, it furnishes the emotional strength necessary to quicken public inertia, to curb the forces of evil, and to force mere intellectual criticism into activity. Only restrictive action can safeguard the public from exposure to the worst forms of evil, and no real solution of the amusement problem will be achieved without due emphasis being placed upon this type of action.

Restrictive public opinion in relation to the problem as a whole has found an effective means of control in a system of licenses, issued for the premises rather than the man who operates the enterprise. This makes possible an effective regulation of conditions in respect to safety and health, the sale of liquor, proper closing hours, an age limit for young people, and the revocation of the license for failure to comply with laws. A system of inspection makes possible the enforcement of the conditions upon which the license was granted, and likewise aids in the operation of the criminal law against offenders. As the cities awake to their corporate responsibility for public recreation, a rapid increase in the establishment of license systems with inspection is taking place.

Any study of restrictive and regulative measures, enforced or unenforced by the agency of government, is convincing in

two respects. First, the absolute necessity of such action is apparent if the worst elements in community life are to be restrained and open outbreaks of evil avoided. Second, the impossibility of ever securing a full solution of the problem by legislation is equally apparent. It is too complex and human a problem for that. If the spirit of play is to be fully released to its rightful place in American life, public opinion must find a deeper answer to these issues than can ever be expressed in agitation or governmental regulation. They do not go to the roots of the question.

## *Constructive Public Opinion*

Constructive public opinion offers more fundamental solutions; it does more than restrict manifest wickedness; it strives to get at the deep-seated causes of the evils which have emerged, and cut them off at their source. It seeks to discover the normal human desire which has been perverted in its expression, and to work for the natural and wholesome expression of that desire. It maps out a progressive program, and seeks to hold public opinion of the first type to a prolonged campaign and the support of thoroughgoing solutions. Many friends of wholesome play are hard at work in the mood of such constructive effort and are achieving tangible results. They stake their case on the absolute validity and the fundamental importance in human life of the beneficent instinct of play.

Constructive public opinion starts its campaign with a deep and valiant belief in play. In season and out of season it preaches the gospel of play—an ample opportunity for wholesome pleasure for every man, woman, and child, in every home, store, and factory in America, and the means of enjoying it to the full at least once every week. The gospel of play is the beginning of wisdom in this whole matter. Perhaps the most fundamental and enduring of all solutions of the problem lies in the universal adoption of this gospel, in the full development of private recreation as over against public

—private in the sense that the crowd is avoided, that commercialized attractions are shunned and reliance placed upon plays and games in which personal skill, initiative, wit, and originality count. It is to be remembered also that in the development of the finer sides of life, in the cultivation of music, art, literature, religion, and social service, joy comes to full fruition. The spirit of youth never had a greater multitude of wholesome recreations, easy of access, than in America to-day.

It is just here that the significance of amateur athletics in all their wide range as a solution of the problem is evident. By their very nature a sharp line is drawn against professionalism. The test of the amateur is freedom from personal commercialization. Commercialism is eliminated, therefore, when the rules are observed, and only in the case of spectacular teams or great institutions where enormous crowds attend the games, does commercialization in management become a problem or harmful publicity develop. For the rest, the pure love of sport dominates the situation, and it is the inherent nature of successful sport to be morally clean. In it the taint of immorality is a fatal weakness. Amateur athletics thus become not only a magnificent expression of the play spirit, but a positive and effective opponent of the evil tendencies in prevalent amusements. It would be difficult to over-emphasize, therefore, the value of amateur baseball, football, boating, track games, tennis, swimming, tramping, and the like, in the warmer months; and skating, bobbing, skeeing, and gymnasium games, such as handball and basketball, in the winter months.

Add to organized athletics the wide variety of other private recreations, such as camping, riding and driving, the ancient and honorable picnic, fishing and hunting, gardening, photography, outings, travel, woodcraft, and nature study; and to these the pleasure of music, home games, private social parties, minstrel shows, and amateur theatricals; and through them all trace the perennial joy of natural love and friendship. All these by their healthy vigor, their spontaneity and

wit, their freedom from sordid commercialism, and their clean morality, may become the most far-reaching solution of our present problem. How vital are the restorations that work out in us when we play with joyous absorption!

Truly the gospel of play is the beginning of wisdom in this matter, and any parent, any person set in authority over young people, or any employer of labor, who turns a deaf ear to its appeal and clings to the worn-out doctrine of repressing the play impulse, commits a grievous sin against society. On the other hand, those who use their power to enlarge the play life of young people and help to release their pent desires for healthy pleasure are among the saviours of the race. It is necessary to believe in play, despite the evils which fasten themselves about it—aye, the more for that very reason—for the spirit of youth and the spirit of life are killed where play is denied. The gospel of play has saved many souls that were cast down wounded in our over-heated and under-ventilated order of industry, and sent them back to their jobs with the highly moral purpose to "hit the line hard," to "play fair," and not to be "quitters." Organized and competitive play is giving us much of the moral equivalent of war and vastly more that war could never give, and giving it, moreover, without war's horrors and brutalities.

Constructive public opinion begins its crusade with the gospel of play, but it has also grappled with all phases of this problem and taken vigorous organized action in support of its ideals. Many constructive efforts have been put forth, such as the Drama League and the Movement for Amateur Dramatics; increased provisions for wholesome social life, such as those provided in churches, settlements, and social centers; facilities for the free development of outdoor recreation in public parks and playgrounds; the festival pageant movement and many other varied activities which are included in the Recreation Movement as a whole.

These various movements, representing public opinion, have brought us on no little distance in the improvement of conditions, and yet the need of a fuller public awakening is equally

evident. Public opinion has been far too often spasmodic in its character, superficial, and lacking in coherent moral purpose. There must be awakened a firm, alert, and dominating public conscience in relation to these evils.

## *Why Study Christianity?*

We take up the study of Christianity in the hope of discovering in it a power which can meet the manifest need of energizing the public conscience to persistent and fundamental activity in the full solution of the problem. Does the Christian teaching contain the potency to do this thing? Is Christianity socially effective? It is one thing to discover the need of a complete public awakening to the present situation and the improvement of that situation by pressure of the public conscience. It is another thing to energize and sustain the public conscience to meet the need with effective action. The one is a work for sociology, the other a work for religion. Can the Christian religion do it?

Democracy keeps throwing us back a little farther each year upon the necessity of intelligent public opinion as the chief agent of social reconstruction and social control. The battle of battles in America to-day is for the mastery of the sources of public opinion. The great newspapers have been generally the servants of special interests. Press bureaus have guaranteed to create popularity or hound a man out of public life with amazing assurance of success. Oratory is turned on at a fixed price per kilowat hour. The sources of public opinion are the golden keys in a democracy. Have the teachings of Jesus any power over public opinion?

If our study might help to uncover here a great force that could energize the public conscience and sustain it in its efforts to stamp out unwholesomeness in amusements, it would be well. May it not be that these teachings still have in them the power to overturn the established forms of social life as they have done so many times in history? Might they not energize the public conscience in restrictive and construc-

tive action, put a stop to exploitation, and release the human spirit in new eruptions of joy?

We study Christianity, furthermore, to rediscover its positive message to the spontaneous interests of youth. It is evident that all the major questions of young people's lives are closely related to their amusements. Work and play, friendship, love, and marriage, the best gifts of life, are all bound up with them. All their personal moral questions are colored by them, and these questions have now become exceedingly complex in the face of commercial offerings. This makes the amusements of young people under the conditions of modern life, especially in the cities, a paradoxically serious matter.

The prevalent reaction against certain historic interpretations of Christianity, the well-meaning prohibitions of parents and churches, and their frequent failure to provide an adequate recreation program suited to present needs—all intensify the present difficulty. This may mean that the whole of the teaching in its relation to youth is imperiled, and the working morality of youth at its point of need left with inadequate guidance. The Christian religion is on trial before the spirit of youth to-day in America. Youth is insisting that the tests of any religion are not to be separated from its offerings of joy. It is as necessary that Christianity be retested by the perennial motives of youth, by motives of joy, as it is for the spirit of youth to be all the time tested by it. Christianity may not survive without the allegiance of youth, certainly not the Christianity of Him who said, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." Every youth has a right to know whether Christianity has an adequate answer to his normal craving for happiness and what that answer is. Must the Christian be an ascetic? Is gloom the natural atmosphere of the followers of Christ? Are spontaneity and laughter to be banished in his name and Christianity to be regarded only as a discipline? Is social stiffness a necessary part of Christian conduct? Does the graveyard really belong next the church? These

and a host of questions like them must be answered with no uncertain voice. The present inadequate teaching of the churches in relation to the buoyancy of youth intensifies the seriousness of the present situation and sends us to a fresh study of the teaching of Jesus himself for practical guidance.

We study the Christian teaching, finally, because amusements are so uniquely personal in their appeal and influence. We must go deeper down into human life than legislation takes us, deeper down than organization takes us, deeper down than conventional conceptions of Christianity take us, if we would find the enduring solutions. Personal attitudes and participations cannot be ignored. They must be shaped to worthy ends. Through them must come the final answer to these social needs. This fact leads us to seek a compelling power which can actually mold the character and conduct of individuals, and guide them through the maze of personal temptations with which these enterprises glitter. Does this power lie imbedded in Christianity?

## *Christianity Has Long Ministered to Individuals*

We may take up the study of Christian teaching with hope, for it is an open fact of history that the teachings of Jesus have already given moral guidance to countless individuals. Christianity has been widely criticized in recent years as an individualistic religion, inadequately social. Those who criticize it thus bear unintended witness that Christianity does minister to individual needs. Christian history confirms their testimony. In many lands, among many races, through twenty centuries, the power of Christian teaching to be a guide in personal problems has been established. It may not have eradicated evil, but its enormous influence in the improvement of individual character is established by the continuity of Christian experience in innumerable lives. In studying the personal temptations in amusements, therefore, we are in the field where Christianity has long made most valuable contributions.

## *Jesus Recognizes Sin and Temptation as Facts of Life to be Met and Overcome*

The beginning of the Christian answer to the amusement situation lies in the recognition of one's own personal wrong-doing as sin.

"In the recreation problem," writes Professor Ross, "the conflict is not so much between groups as between warring sides of human nature—appetite and will, impulse and reason, inclination and ideal. Here, if anywhere, is the place for ethical considerations. The disposition of leisure time is pre-eminently a conscience matter." [1]

This is the section of life in which the colored glasses have to come off. Temptations have to be seen and valued as they are. The rosy lure of commercial attractions has to be seen against the cold gray results of the morning after, and the enticement of certain appeals rebuffed because they lead straight into sin and shame. This is the portion of life in which sin is sin, temptation is temptation, and no hazy thinking is safe for an instant. It is likewise the portion of life in which the cleverest tricks and devices are everywhere employed to cloud the light of accurate judgment and confuse the sense of moral values.

The teachings of Jesus present to the study of this problem the sharp recognition of sin as sin, and bring to it the basic ethical principles which for centuries have called men to better lives. Why should any reasoning man desire to evade straight thinking on these matters? For those who dare to face moral facts with the same courage with which they face economic facts, the teachings of Jesus have truth to reveal. In them there is no evasion of that moral struggle which is so large a part of the inward life.

The sense of sin is no worn-out doctrine of the Middle Ages. It is now and ever a fact of experience, sharp and vivid in the hearts of those who seek to live their life at its

[1] Edward Alsworth Ross, Introduction to "Popular Amusements."

best. Jesus recognized this and made his appeal not to emotion, not to creedal conformity, not to ecclesiastical adherence, but straight to the wills of men. Only as they face the immoral temptations in amusements *as sin,* and set their wills to its overthrow in their lives, can the teaching of Jesus mean anything in the solution of the amusement problem. Their whole perspective of life shifts under Jesus' high demand.

"The will, invited to this definite decision, becomes aware of habits and tendencies whose significance has been unrecognized and whose mastery has been unchecked. It is as though the landscape of life were blurred in outline because seen through an ill-adjusted glass, and as though the action of the will threw the picture of life into focus, so that one saw the perspective of conduct with a new sense of vividness and precision. As the horizon of inclination thus takes shape, there comes to the beholders a shock of surprise and shame. Gross and startling shapes, at once repelling and irresistible, grow distinct and recognizable. The action of the will discloses an area of conduct in which are seen volcanic craters, threatening an outpouring of evil, from which one recoils with horror and alarm. Life which had appeared a tranquil and orderly growth seems disordered, divided, undermined." [1]

Victory over temptation and evil habit does not come without the full recognition and fearless branding of one's own sin as sin. The man whose moral problem is unsolved is the man who evades and dodges the truth. No real solution of the amusement problem will be found in Jesus' teaching by any man who refuses to face the true nature of his own amusements, and to change his attitudes and participations in the light of the truth he finds. Jesus carries the social test straight home to the individual and never hoped to solve a social problem which could not somehow be solved in a human heart. Not until the man who, under the guise of "appreciating dramatic art," has been letting his imagination run riot with sensual images, brands his theater-going as

[1] F. G. Peabody, "Jesus Christ and the Christian Character," pp. 103–104.

sensual, will there be any solution of the problem for him. Not until the athlete who has learned a "trick" by which he deceives the umpire, brands his own action as dishonest, will there be any solution of the problem for him. The man who goes out for a night of debauch and the degradation of womanhood under the lying label of "a good time" (save the mark!)—how can he begin to get straight on the amusement problem till he brands his own sin as sin and sets his will to the transformation of his own life?

In this relentless demand of Jesus that men shall recognize their own perverse habits and evil tendencies as sin lies a vast contribution to the solution of all social problems; and the thoroughgoing transformation of individual lives which it necessitates is a mighty leverage on the evils involved in popular amusements.

### *Jesus Justifies the True Expression of Every Normal Impulse*

Does the demand of Jesus that sin and temptation be branded for what they are imply that some of our natural impulses are to be denied expression? Was Jesus an ascetic? Vast numbers of his followers have been so. The first disciples were a joyous company. "They took their food with gladness and singleness of heart." When the Holy Spirit came upon them they were so elated and acted so much like revelers that "others said 'they are filled with new wine.'" And yet the early joy evaporated. The irrepressible gladness of the first disciples was sadly lost through the cleavage between the Christian and the world. During long ages ascetic and flagellant banished all earthly pleasure, mortifying the normal appetites of the body in the name of Jesus, tantalizing the natural cravings for bodily comfort, hunger, thirst, sleep, and sex. They were the heroes of the faith. Natural pleasure was the sin of sins. Spontaneity was curbed and laughter banished in his name. In the eyes of countless followers through the ages he has been as one who never smiled. Monk and nun, Jacobin and Puritan, with a host of others,

have through the years marched past the eager spirit of youth in stern procession, thinking thereby to do him reverence. The miracle is that youth has been so often kindled by those who spoke for him. Even in recent years, in the eyes of young people a forbidding negative has been the attitude of many who spoke in his name. He has been identified with repression and restraint. Mirth and a lively spirit have been accounted unbecoming in the "saints."

Jesus, however, was no ascetic. Intensely earnest and consecrated to his task, absorbed in his mission, and yearning for its fulfilment, he yet was no ascetic. He dignified every normal impulse and recognized for each a true expression.

"He did not live as an ascetic himself. He himself tells us that he was reproached that he was unlike John the Baptist in this, and was called 'a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber,' because he did not practise the austerities which had made John familiar. Nothing could be more illuminating on Christ's life in this respect than that criticism, which he accepts as marking him off in the popular mind from John. He knew that he was misunderstood and that he laid himself open to grave objections by refusing to lay stress on the outward rules, which the Pharisees and the disciples of the Baptist thought so important. . . . They could not reconcile the high demands of holiness which he preached with the sweet and sunny and natural life he lived. . . . The records are full of his social intercourse with all sorts of people, rich and poor, saint and sinner. He accepted invitations to feasts; went to a marriage; sat down to dinner with hospitable Pharisees; was a frequent visitor at the house of Martha and Mary at Bethany. He had the instinctive human longing for companionship, which made him desire to have some of the disciples with him at the great crises of his life. No one can read the Gospels with an unprejudiced eye, without feeling how preposterous is the ascetic contention that it is based on the requirements of the Christian life." [1]

Let it never seem incongruous then to think of Jesus in the

[1] Hugh Black, "Culture and Restraint," pp. 311-313.

midst of wholesome merry-making. Read the story freshly. Catch his spontaneity and sense of humor, his flashing sally and retort. Share his relish for the out-of-doors, his companionship with children, his high mood of fellowship in a bridegroom's joy. The charm of a rich personality is always evanescent, baffling description, yet he who runs may read that Jesus was, beyond the power of the records to describe him, a radiant personality.

But Jesus not only radiated happiness; he lived it into the lives of other people. His message to humanity is a message of "good tidings." How often such words as these were on his lips: "Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad." "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." "Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy." "Can the sons of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?" "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you."

This enduring joy of Jesus reaches the loftiest heights and sweeps his followers up with him to profound experiences of spiritual exaltation, *but it never denies the validity of any wholesome happiness which it surpasses.*

Jesus justifies the true expression of every normal impulse. He reveals the "native joy of all sentient beings" as divine in origin:

> ". . . the cool silver shock
> Of the plunge in a pool's living water,"

and every other thrill of bodily exercise is Christian pleasure. Flashes of humor, flights of imagination, thrusts of argument, upleaping emotions, and the pure loves of men and women and children—these are Christian joys. Jesus validates the whole of human life in every true expression and calls it to its best.

What then are *true* expressions of the normal impulses? How daring is Jesus' answer to this question! He leaves it

to the individual to decide. In no other way could he have shown a greater faith in human nature. He lays down no rules, requires no ritual, no ceremonial practices. His own example, his majestic teachings, and his continuing presence—these he gives to his followers and then leaves them wholly free to exercise "the liberty that is in Christ."

And yet his life, his principles, and his presence make clear the yearning of his desire. He himself had a "manner of life" and his desire for all his men was truly voiced when Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the good tidings of Christ." No one has a right to map out the manner of life, in the name of Christ, for another human soul, but as his followers achieve it worthily for themselves by the imitation of his life, the study of his principles and the practice of his presence, they learn what is for them the true expression of every normal impulse, the true satisfaction of every normal desire.

## *Jesus Assigns to Amusements Their True Importance*

Since Jesus justifies the true expression of every normal impulse and gives this "liberty that is in Christ," does he mean that a man is free to do what he will? If so, why not let one's impulses express themselves in any fashion they please? Why not turn the tables on asceticism and make the satisfaction of desire the end of life? Why not be Epicurean along with the countless throngs who put the pursuit of pleasure above all other ends?

To such a mood as this there comes the reply that—

"The Epicurean's varied and spontaneous joy in life is not diminished, but enhanced, by the Christian spirit, which multiplies this joy as many times as there are persons whom one knows and loves. The Epicurean lives in a little world of himself, and a few equally self-centered companions. The Christian lives in the great world of God, and shares its joys with all God's human children. It is the absence of this

larger world, the exclusive concern for his own narrow pleasures, that make the consistent Epicurean, with all his polish and charm, the essentially mean and despicable creature we find him to be." [1]

In further contrast to the Epicurean who makes pleasure the end of life, the teaching of Jesus reveals a different emphasis which, while it validates pleasure, makes it a secondary rather than a primary end. Jesus, like others with unified personality, organized his life about a central principle. As other men are led by desire for gain, the quest of knowledge, or the love of pleasure, Jesus concentrated his attention on the establishment of the Christian Order in the life of the world—the Kingdom of God on earth, a reign of peace and joy. By the achievement of this end human happiness would be immeasurably increased. To this end he revealed the Fatherhood of God. To this end he taught and sacrificed. To this end he submitted to the Cross, and to this same end he still speaks in the lives of men who follow him. *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matt. 6:33). This is the principle by which Jesus intended his men to come to a sense of proportion on relative values in life. This is the clue to Jesus' own perspective on all the varying appeals that came to him. To this test he brought every solicitation of secondary things, for he was in the world for nothing else so much as to reveal to men the Fatherly character of God that a righteous social order might prevail. This is the high point of emphasis in Jesus' teaching from which any man may look afar with good perspective on all the motives and habits of his life. The real Christian focuses his vision through some such lens as this: "I will live my life, under God, for others rather than myself, for the advancement of the Kingdom of God rather than my personal happiness." The man who sees every portion of his life with the perspective of such a purpose will have no difficulty in getting Jesus' point

[1] William DeWitt Hyde, "From Epicurus to Christ," pp. 267-268.

of view on popular amusements. He will see how trivial the mere pursuit of pleasure becomes in the presence of the dark problems of human need.

This principle guides the Christian man in the use of his time. He who seeks first to do his share in making the present order Christian will spend all the time he needs in recreation and enjoy it to the full, to lay the foundations of life-long health, and to maintain his powers at their best with snap and vigor, but not more. He will not waste a day or an hour while the Christian order comes so slowly.

This principle guides the Christian man in the use of money. Part of one's budget every month, however small, will go to freshening the sources of life in a genuine re-creation of power. But no money will be flung away in a mood of careless or selfish spending. And yet the box-office totals in any Christian community show how little this principle has yet been applied to the use of money.

This principle also guides in the quality of recreation which is to be selected, and here it becomes in reality a decisive factor, determining in large measure the very quality of one's life. Commercial amusements supply for the most part only a tantalizing appeal to the sensations, even when they are free from alcoholic stimulant. Curiosity thrills, and superficial ticklings, spectator's flushes of excitement, red peppered food and dancing, high voltage currents for nerves already deadened—these are the common characteristics of commercialized offerings. Over against these vapid things set the joyous re-creation of life which is Christian; set the spontaneity of an unspoiled human spirit releasing its normal impulses in play; set a thousand and one activities of play which light up the faces of tired men and women and send them on refreshed for the work of another day.

But beyond these, this principle calls men to the profoundest experiences of joy that are known to human life. At the highest remove from ticklings of sensation is the radiance of Jesus' mood, on that last black night of his life when he talked with his men in quietness about his joy. Think of

the facts of that last night of his life! The months of his daring speech are over. To all appearances he has failed. His popularity has waned. The crowd has deserted him. His war with the priests and Pharisees is nearly over. The net of their power narrows about him. Judas has already gone out. This very night the rest have shown again their failure to understand him, despite the fellowship and lavished affection. He knows that Peter will disown him and the rest desert him. Alone, indeed, and young as he is, a lover of life, now to be cut down in the morning of his power, to be crucified like a thief; and yet he speaks with his men in quietness about his joy. The vision of the Kingdom is branded as a dream. His yearnings for the brotherhood of man are beaten back within him. The love that has given itself with abandon is rejected—and yet he speaks with his men in quietness about his joy. "I will not leave you desolate; I come unto you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled."

These are the depths and heights of human experience, and Jesus expected all his men to plumb the depths of this same joy and to rise to these exalted heights, because they were to have companionship in the same purpose of life and could surely know that whatever happened to their individual lives, the mighty power of the Everlasting God was bound to go on achieving the Christian Social Order.

Thus Jesus, through this high principle of life, let his men into a double secret—the secret of the Christian perspective on amusements, and the far deeper secret of entrance into the profoundest joy humanity can know. Any man who unreservedly commits his life to Christ learns this double secret, for Jesus leads his men to face their personal temptations, to choose their recreations, and to do their work in the world, in the true perspective of his own purpose. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

This perspective of the Kingdom will guide us in the study

of personal temptations and Christian principles in relation to the different forms of amusement.

## Daily Readings

1. It staggers the imagination to think of the myriad of individuals to whom Christianity has ministered through devoted men and women. Jesus gives here a great example.

> Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.—Luke 10: 30-37.

Did you skip the last sentence?

2. Why do men use nicknames for their *own sins:* "swiping" and "cribbing" for stealing; "piped" for drunkenness; "squibbing" for lying—these and many more? In what sense is the process of repentance the branding of *your own* sin by the same name which society uses for it?

What else does repentance involve?
Jesus put first things first in his preaching.

> Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent* ye, and believe in the gospel.—Mark 1:14, 15.

Have I put first things first in *my* life?

3. Let these words answer those who hold to Christianity only as a discipline of hard-and-fast rules.

How does he crown the beautiful expression of a woman's impulse of affection?

> And while he was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of pure nard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head. But there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made? For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred shillings, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her. But Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always.—Mark 14:3-7.

4. Contrast the attitude of the prevalent "free spending" upon amusements with the use of money that Jesus commends.

> And he sat down over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are

> casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.—Mark 12:41-44.

Have I submitted my use of money to the test of the principles of Jesus?

5. Who better than Jesus himself has described the common "eat, drink, and be merry" type of man—the man whose own comfort gives him his perspective on relative values of life? Jesus spots the flaw in the lens. What is it?

> And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. —Luke 12:16-21.

6. What sort of happiness do they have who gain the perspective on life which goes with the purpose of the Kingdom?

> Seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Yet seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.—Luke 12:29-32.

7. Are those whose lives have been marred by pain and

suffering freed from the law of joy? Not so with the stricken man who sang—

"If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness,
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked at my sullen heart in vain:
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take,
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin
And to my dead heart run them in!"

—*Robert Louis Stevenson:* "The Celestial Surgeon."

It must be that all men and women are meant to *achieve* the joy which is in Christ.

> And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you. And in that day ye shall ask me no question. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.—John 16: 22-24.

## Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

*What is the relation of public opinion to the amusement situation?*

How far is the public attitude in regard to these evils responsible for them?

Would it be possible for an active public opinion to transform the situation?

How sensitive is the pocketbook nerve of commercial management to public demands?

*How does public opinion make itself felt?*

What are the characteristic expressions of restrictive public opinion? How bad must a situation be before restrictive public opinion wakes up? How long does it stay awake?

Why is restrictive public action necessary? How long will it continue to be needed?

What are the distinctive differences between constructive and restrictive public opinion? If constructive public opinion is alert, is restrictive action still necessary?

How many people have become so dependent upon commercial amusements that they do not know how to play without buying amusement? How is this revealed in the comparative use by adults of free public parks and commercial amusement resorts?

What responsibility have the home, the church, and the school for developing play resources in children which make for independence of commercial amusements?

How are friendly athletics especially important in the improvement of the situation?

*What contribution has Christianity for the amusement situation?*

How far has it contributed to restrictive and constructive public efforts?

To what degree is Christianity essential to the full solution of the problem?

What tricks and devices are employed to obscure the true moral character of many commercial amusements? What is the message of Christianity in regard to them?

What personal demands do the teachings of Jesus make of one who would share in the Christian solution of the problem?

What human impulses does Christianity brand as wrong?

Are the Christian guides for determining the true expression of an impulse adequate?

*What are the essential differences between the experience of being amused and of coming to a realization of Christian joy?*

CHAPTER III

# DRAMATIC MISREPRESENTATIONS OF LIFE AND THE CHRISTIAN TRUTH-ABOUT-LIFE

## *Serious Drama—Its Nature and Purpose*

Serious drama, defined as "a sincere portrayal of life by imitation in action," answers as a fine art to a persistent human interest, an interest in the meaning of the human story with its varied motives, characters, and conditions. It depends upon a play which is a representation of life, upon actors who possess some measure of artistic skill, and upon an audience which has at least some degree of serious interest. It is, as its name implies, an effort to give a true expression of the dramatic impulse. Its purpose is primarily to give recreation in the full sense of the word, and it achieves its purpose in either tragedy or comedy by the effective substitution of the world of imagination presented on the stage for the matter-of-fact worlds in which the members of the audience live. It releases them in flight beyond the stern borders to which life has brought them, and thrills them with some bit of the human story which might be their own.

## *Misrepresentations of Life in Dramatic Amusements*

Serious drama, despite its high purpose and possibilities, falls far below its own standards, as presented in the great mass of commercial theaters in America. Grouped with it for our consideration also are other phases of dramatic entertainment which lack the dignity and quality which it

possesses. The present situation throughout the dramatic group indeed is characterized by widespread misrepresentations of the human story. Scores of popular plays do not tell the truth about life. They do not present an accurate picture of human experience. The satisfactions permitted by playwrights to their characters could not be known by them in life itself. The results of human action as portrayed are not the results of such action as experienced. The audience is therefore led to generalize falsely about the laws of human life. For example, a life of license is pictured as a life of liberty and joy. Remorse and the broken years are obscured. Thus infidelity is made to seem "not so bad," even "justifiable under certain conditions." The blasted child and the life-long suffering are permitted to be forgotten. The picture is simply not a true picture.

Audiences are everywhere tempted to believe a variety of lies about life such as these: "Happy are they who follow their own desires now, for they shall taste all the joys of life." "The love of money is the root of all the roses." "Cleverness covers a multitude of sins." "Blessed is he who gets away with the stuff." The theater is responsible for persuasive portrayals of a host of lies like these, and in no small measure for their wide acceptance among the people.

But perhaps the most damning lie of which this group of amusements is guilty is that which hides in the cynicism of certain plays, especially burlesque and musical comedies. It is well described by one who says: "The cynical ideas which are accepted as the current coin of comedy, the low ideas which are supposed to animate everybody, the sordid acceptance of pecuniary standards, the universal mendacity ascribed to human nature in a fix, the mutual deception of spouses, the pervasive wink, the sniggering acquiescence in a human nature infinitely below the best standards of our race—all this presented steadily, year in, year out, in a thousand theaters, must be perpetually corroding and undermining all the ideals for which the churches are fighting."

The playwright and actor who join in this malicious attack

upon faith in human virtue, and who trick an audience into confusion about the laws of life, have done an evil thing, for the truth about life is the most priceless asset of the human race, long lived for and died for by noble men and women. Nothing is more sacred. Our lives depend upon it. The fabric of civilization is wrought of it, and when men and women believe lies in place of it, the social order rots out.

Another misrepresentation of life in the dramatic amusement group is close akin, namely, the presentation of scenes which are sensually suggestive, which convey a perverted conception of life. Every type of commercial dramatic amusement reveals this taint to a greater or less degree, and many productions depend upon little else to hold attention. Even in high grade theaters some of the plays presented offer little more than a series of highly colored scenes full of voluptuous suggestion, under the guise of dramatic art. In downward scale to the undisguised exhibition of lewd dances in cheap burlesque and vaudeville shows, there range all varieties of song and dance, posture and gesture, dialogue and chorus which are frequently animated by no other motive than that of sex suggestion.

Burlesque, cheap vaudeville, and musical farce comedies may be the worst offenders, but the degree to which the taint has spread throughout the whole dramatic group is nothing short of alarming to those who hold high ideals for dramatic art and would be loyal to Christian conceptions of the meaning and value of human life.

The temptation to watch, to listen to, and dwell upon suggestive scenes, in the nature of the case appeals to men with singular power and immediacy. It is to the passions of men, especially young men, that the suggestion is almost wholly directed. It is made to an impulse which needs no stimulation, to an impulse which with great numbers of men, is still unrationalized in its expressions and which, under the manifold excitements of modern life, needs vigorous control by all the best powers of heart and mind. It cannot be doubted that those who bring the magnifying power of

dramatic portrayal to the service of forces that work for licentiousness are spreading immorality broadcast and catering directly to the organized business of prostitution.

These temptations of the dramatic group are both temptations of seeing and hearing—temptations of receptivity rather than of action. They are all involved in the choice of that to which one yields his powers of attention, and constitute the fundamental moral issue in dramatic amusements, which is the temptation to yield attention by eye and ear to that which is unworthy. Dramatic impressions are by their nature sharp and compelling; eye and ear are so played upon by vivid portrayals that gateways to the deeper emotions open, and the inner life lies bare. When the untrue and the sensual are persistently presented and closely attended to, disastrous results are sure to follow by the working of natural laws. When the truth about life is distorted and moral values perverted, a whole series of base impressions are received by eye and ear which must in turn have corresponding expressions in conduct.

## *The Principles of Jesus in Relation to These Temptations*

### *The Guarded Eye and Ear*

Against this fundamental temptation involved in all types of commercial dramatic amusement, to give attention to misrepresentations of life, Jesus sets the principle of—The Guarded Eye and Ear.

Jesus values above all else the inner fastnesses of a man's life and the gateways leading to them. Early in his career of public speaking he showed his grasp of the problem of attention when he said:

> If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear. . . .
> Take heed what ye hear. . . .—Mark 4: 23, 24.

> Take heed therefore how ye hear.—Luke 8: 18.

Obviously he knew that the gates of the mind were to be stormed by sights and sounds breeding sin. At the best, evil would gain entrance. After every guard had been set and every lock bolted, evil would yet steal in. Whatever the defenses might be, some arrows of evil would pierce them through. But the doors need not be opened from within, no invitation need issue forth. Again and again through the crowded days as he dealt bare-handed with evil, he cried out to his men to guard the inner life and all those sacred forces which must come forth in their turn unweakened for their work.

This guarding of one's inner life and its receptivities is for no negative purpose. There is work for eye and ear to do; they are to feed the life by their choices; they are to be the nourishers of the soul. The might of the man depends upon them, and attention is therefore to be given to the words of Christ, for they bring a life of joy. His followers are to be good listeners. "Let these words sink into your ears."

> But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.—Matt. 13:16.

> Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock. Luke 6:47, 48.

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.—John 5:24.

Clearly, therefore, the eye and ear are dedicated to high uses as gateways to the life within, and how definite Christian duty becomes in the face of the temptations prevalent in dramatic amusements to-day!

There is no more justification in the teaching of Jesus for wilful exposure of eye and ear to evil than there is in medical teaching for eating tubercular meat. If a man makes an honest effort to live out this principle of Jesus, he will refuse altogether to go to some theaters just as he refuses to go to restaurants where the food is dirty and infected. More than this, he will be on his guard all the time in relation to all theaters, even the best, for he knows that in all there is likelihood of taint. Many Christian men and women avoid all commercial theaters for this reason. Jesus demands of all his followers perfect moral health for the sake of efficiency in creating the Christian order, and he is content with nothing less. Clearly the Christian demand is that one shall seek dramatic recreation only under conditions and associations which are able both to refresh and enrich his life, and which he knows to be morally sound according to the standards of Jesus.

### *Purity of Heart*

Over against the misrepresentations of life in scenes which are sensually suggestive, Jesus sets the clear principle of Purity of Heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

The world has changed very little since Jesus' day in respect to this world-old elemental fact of sex temptation. He did not dwell on it, but he uttered the eternal truth about it, which permeated all his living and teaching. He clothed it in one sword thrust of a sentence sharp enough to pierce the marrow of men in great audiences at nasty shows to-day, could they but hear it again with the unpoisoned hearing of boyhood. "I say unto you that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." How well he knew men and the immediacy of a man's temptation. "He himself knew what was in man." He knew the "imagination of the thoughts of his heart," the temptation to look and think in a way

which relaxes all the strong fidelities of his life. So sharp did he know the temptation to be that he sets, with a quick stroke, the result of yielding instantly beside the temptation and suggests that even a momentary look may sweep a man on to the full-imagined act, which in turn leaves but another step to the overt act itself. It is the wildfire havoc of impurity in men's lives that is so startling to Jesus. The quickness of it! The deadliness of it! —burning out a life both branch and root. Paul put it rightly when he wrote to Titus, "To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled." For a man to allow his imagination to light up with sensual desire is about as safe as lighting a match in dry prairie grass.

Now it is precisely because the sex impulse is so personal, so private, so instinctively guarded by reticence that we think of purity chiefly in relation to it. For this same reason they who vulgarize the thought of the sex relation, who make common that which is essentially intimate and holy are stained with pollution. Every thought of a man about it is to be as pure as sunlight, guarded as one would guard a vestal fire.

Purity to Jesus was no mere hand-washing virtue as it was to many in his day. He rescued it from among external qualities and put it at the core of his message of the truth-about-life. He marvelously enriched and deepened men's thought about it. He set it forth as worthy of any sacrifice. He made men see it as worth a lifetime of striving, as Galahad saw it—the indispensable quality of a life without which no man could win the Holy Grail.

The hell of impurity must have been in his mind when he cried out with fierce intensity—"If thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire."

"Blessed are the pure in heart," he cried, "for they shall see God." This is the top peak of the truth about purity.

The pure see God. It is axiomatic that his glory may be seen by none save the reverent, and reverence, therefore, is the secret of purity. The reverent are pure in heart. Irreverence is the key to impurity. To make vulgar, cheap, and unrevered—that is the process of impurity. For a woman to cheapen herself in the eyes of men by pose or costume, look or jest, is the very essence of impurity.

Jesus sharply calls men away from this temptation which is so often the basis of appeal in dramatic amusements. Purity of heart is his quick weapon against every assault of vulgarity, his answer to every enticement toward the sensual life. He demands of all his men a purity which reveres every human life as sacred and refuses to go or stay where men and women are degraded by any kind of sensual suggestions. He demands a steady habit of reverence that looks away on past this temptation, fastening its gaze on God himself, a God of Holiness. This of itself keeps a man happy. Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." And to the young man whom Paul enjoined to "flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," he also wrote "the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned."

*The Truth-About-Life*

Over against the temptation to believe in lies about life, Jesus sets the one clear principle of the Truth.

All lies are evil in his sight. They dynamite the very foundation from under the structure of life. Lies involving veracity between man and man are bad enough and wreck a human relationship; but lies about the meaning of life itself, vividly portrayed, distorting sacred values, and shot home to the core of men's being under the mask of truth, with the label of art upon them, these are betrayals indeed.

Nothing so stirred the wrath of Jesus as the vivid portrayal of falsehood about the real values of life as he saw

it in the make-up of some of the Pharisees. Men of renown and chief actors though they were, he branded them as spiritual murderers because they acted out a living lie about the most sacred thing in life. It is chiefly because they were superlative liars that he cried out to them:

> Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God. . . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not.—John 8:40, 44, 45.

No wonder that lies about life were evil in his sight when he saw them blasting the men who held the power of leadership over the people. It was lies about life he was branding when he hailed them before the multitude with,

> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. . . . Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?—Matt. 23:27, 33.

Even in the sharpest pressure of his work when "the multitude were gathered together, insomuch that they trod one upon another," Jesus stopped to call his men close about him and warn them again against the power of lies. He feared they might be caught unaware even in his presence.

> He began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. But there is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.—Luke 12:1, 2.

Apparently, therefore, that lie which Jesus can tolerate least of all is the lie that is acted out, for that is the sin of hypocrisy itself and constitutes a man a hypocrite, a living embodiment of falsehood.

Repugnant to the thought of Jesus, therefore, are all those careless lies bandied about so often even in high grade theaters—the half truths, the innuendo, the cynicism, by which the careless playwright and actor flaunt the sacredness of truth and play the coward in the face of its high demands.

Any man who would live out this high principle of Jesus must ever be on the alert sharply to detect the least color of untruth in dramatic representations and rebuff with instant courage every subtle appeal of lies about life. As he does this there will grow up in him a realization of the sanctity of the truth akin to that of Jesus, and he will discover its power to keep the inner life inviolate and strong for service.

## Daily Readings

1. There is no more important activity of consciousness than the selection of the objects of attention. In this power lies the chief expression of whatever freedom of the will we may possess, and by it are largely determined one's intellectual growth and moral development. What right, therefore, has any student who seeks to know and follow the teaching of Jesus to select low grade dramatic amusements for his evening entertainment, and focus attention upon them?

> Behold, the sower went forth to sow: and it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it. And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

> And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. And he said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.—Mark 4:3-9.

2. Men's efficiency varies widely, in accordance with their powers of attention and receptivity. If a college man uses ten per cent of his powers of attention or more each week on vaudeville and burlesque shows, where will he be likely to come out in athletic efficiency, in thought power, in moral heroism? Where will the habit take him in four years?

> And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; and when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them. And these in like manner are they that are sown upon the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, straightway receive it with joy; and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble. And others are they that are sown among the thorns; these are they that have heard the word, and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And those are they that were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.—Mark 4:15-20.

3. Many men argue like this: "Conduct is the sole test of life. I may look at or listen to anything I will so long as I do no evil. Knowledge is power, and one must have all kinds of experience." What are the fallacies in this sort of reasoning?

> And he said unto them, Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save

that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear.—Mark 4:21-24.

4. "Every little while I wake up to what I ought to do," says a college man, "when I read a good book or hear a good sermon, but somehow I don't get it done. I listen all right, but I go to a lot of shows too and the things I see and hear there leave me blurred and make me forget." What is Jesus' answer to this man?

Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.—Luke 6:47-49.

5. How well Paul knew the way of victory in that inner struggle to which every mortal is heir, when he wrote to all who would follow Christ:

But I say, Walk by the Spirit and, ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.—Gal. 5:16-18, 22-24.

6. The Christian life is always more positive than negative. Every restraint is matched by a greater joy than that relinquished. Jesus was ever leading his men out to richer experience in the human story. Flee one thing, follow after four things, says Paul.

> But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.—II Tim. 2:22.

What are the one thing and the four things for me?

7. "After all," says a genial fellow, "must one be stickling for the truth all the time? It's often so awkward, you know. You can often make people much happier by shading it a little. Wouldn't the drama lose all its spice if it always panned out like life?" If this view of the importance of truth is right, why do you suppose Jesus dwelt so earnestly during his last hours, when only supreme needs received attention, upon the coming of the Spirit of Truth who should quicken his men to the sharp rejection of lies and all unreality, to the clear discrimination of Truth?

> Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you.—John 16:13-15.

## Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

*What function in recreation and social education have dramatic representations of life?*

To what extent is the appreciation of the issues of life sharpened by dramatic representations?

Are there any dangers in drama at its best? Are misrepresentations of life inevitable in drama?

*Why is it dangerous to commercialize the drama?*

How prevalent in commercial theaters are presentations of lies about life? What lies?

To what degree in typical playhouses does the taint of immoral suggestion extend?

What influences operate to put immoral "color" into commercial drama which do not obtain in amateur dramatics? Do these same influences emerge in college dramatics run as benefits?

In what ways are certain dramatic representations more dangerous for some men and women than others? Why are certain types of shows especially dangerous for college men?

Why is it that when a lie about life is presented it is so often coated with humor?

To what extent are the social practices which rate some women, including chorus girls, as "different from other women" traceable to the attitude of theater patrons?

*What are the chief principles of Jesus in relation to dramatic amusements?*

To what extent does the principle of the guarded eye and ear put dangerous limits upon one's experience and knowledge of life?

What is the difference between innocence and purity of heart?

Why is it that lies about life are so repugnant to the thought of Jesus?

*What attitude would the principles of Jesus lead a Christian man to take in regard to dramatic amusements?*

Who has authority to apply the principles of Jesus to the life of an individual? In what different hands may it rest under different circumstances?

How far must a Christian man be guided by other men's temptations as well as his own in applying the principles of Jesus?

How far can a Christian man allow the popularity of a show or the mood of his "crowd" to determine his decisions about the theater?

Can a Christian have any share in a "college rough house night" at a theater?

Do the values of good drama to society so far outweigh the effects of evil shows as to justify the permanent continuance of the commercial theater?

What is the duty of Christian men and women in a community where there is no playhouse in which one is free from the likelihood of assault by that which is evil? In what ways can they take a positive, personal attitude in relation to drama?

CHAPTER IV

# THE DEGRADATION OF THE SOCIAL IMPULSES AND THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF FRIENDSHIP

## *The Social Impulses and Their Expression*

Deepest of all impulses in human life, save alone those of self-preservation, are the impulses which express themselves in social relationships. No man was meant to live outside of social life. None of us can break out of human ties, as the poet described by Mrs. Browning tried to do and failed, forgetting how universally

> "The rowers lift their oars to view
> Each other in the sea;
> The landsmen watch the rocking boats,
> In a pleasant company;
> While up the hill go gladlier still
> Dear friends by two and three."
> —*Elizabeth Barrett Browning,*
> "The Poet's Vow."

Everywhere among men and women, and especially strong among young people, is the insistent demand for personal relations. On the background of acquaintance companionship springs up and deepens in turn, when worthily founded, into friendship. Among our friends a few are closer to us than others, and crowning all is the intimacy of love and marriage. These social impulses seek everywhere for expression, rebelling against the isolation of the country and the loneliness of great cities, refusing to be blocked by obstacles or prohibitions, and demanding satisfaction in human fellowship which is their natural end.

### *The Degradation of the Social Impulses in the Social Rendezvous Group of Amusements*

The expression of these impulses in public places, however, is fraught with striking dangers. The commercialized management of a social rendezvous arrays about those who frequent it temptations which tend inevitably to degrade social relationships. The chief commercial institutions of this group are cafés with amusement features, music halls, beer gardens, and public dance halls. They have been quick to seize upon the social impulses as the keys to easy money making, and to profit by the difficulties which attend the normal expression of these impulses in city life. They variously cater to sociability through provisions for eating, drinking, smoking, and dancing.

The temptations long prevalent in institutions of this general type have come to a sort of climax in the recently developed cabaret where the entertainment features are of secondary importance and lack the dignity of dramatic art.[1] All the temptations incident to the dramatic group are present, however, and intensified by the social atmosphere as well as by the freedom allowed to the entertainers. These are usually effeminate men and young women with abbreviated costumes, who frequently mingle among those entertained and sing or act in a suggestive manner. This enlarges the opportunity for immoral suggestion and the creation of an atmosphere of license. The steady forcing of the sale of liquor intensifies still further the temptation to loose talk, and often reduces the company to terms of promiscuous familiarity.

Public dance halls in which the modern dances in extreme form are allowed carry this process of degradation one step further. The temptations involved in such dances need to be plainly stated and clearly understood. The fact is that as now frequently danced in public places they involve an unprecedented degree of physical contact and a series of

[1] "Popular Amusements," Social Rendezvous Group.

motions distinctly sensual in character. The dancers are often comparative strangers, and new acquaintances are easy to make. The dancing ordinarily lasts for a number of hours, and often under vicious influences. The effect upon sensitive high-strung young people in the adolescent period—who are the most numerous participants—is obvious and inevitable. The personal dangers here involved are therefore of the gravest and most powerful sort. Active in the realm of the emotions, they are accompanied by intense feeling and are rapidly cumulative in their effects.

Among the dangers are these temptations: To make acquaintance in a rendezvous where sociability is more or less promiscuous, where the atmosphere is one of laxity, and where immoral suggestions are peculiarly operative; to watch or listen to suggestive forms of entertainment, dancing, or music which stir the sensual emotions; to indulge in loose and vulgar talk, thus further breaking down the dignity and mutual self-respect of the relationship; for the man to take advantage of the girl in personal intimacy, breaking down her modesty and beauty of girlhood; for the girl to lure the man on until he loses his self-control, or to permit liberties to be taken which cheapen her person and weaken her powers of resistance; for them to dance together and with others in such a way as to carry this process on to a result which robs them of spiritual chastity.

The dangers involved in all these temptations are intensified to an untold degree by the habit of liquor drinking. In many rendezvous of this group the provision of amusement is wholly a side issue to the main business of selling intoxicating liquors to the largest possible number of people at a maximum profit. The temptation to indulge this habit is therefore fostered by such commercial tricks as these: the frequent appearance of the waiter for a new order and the removal of the partly filled glass; the systematic embarrassment or even the exclusion of those who do not drink; the payment of commissions to girls for getting men to drink; the forcing of high priced "fancy" drinks upon the customers,

cutting down the quantity and putting up the price; and in public dance halls, where the sale of liquor is allowed, the long intermission of ten to twenty minutes with only three or four minutes of dancing. This temptation therefore is the result of a commercial process as diabolical as it is effective. The whole atmosphere of such a place is vitiated by the fumes of commercial aggression. The effect of drinking by young people under such circumstances is to make some degree of intoxication almost inevitable. This leads to the weakening of the higher centers of control and the coarsening of the finer impulses.

Certain results are sure to follow in this process of degrading social relationships. Self-respect is impaired, personality is cheapened, intimacy is profaned, honor is forgotten, and chastity itself is often flung away.

## *The Principles of Jesus in Relation to These Temptations*

Into the smoky atmosphere of drinking places with amusement features and unsupervised dance halls where these temptations burn most fiercely, and indeed upon much of our so-called "best society" where they are not absent, the truth of Jesus flashes like lightning. Wherever youth is corrupted and personality degraded, wherever the most sacred impulses of human life are debased, where those who ought to be guardians of social morals lose their sense of responsibility, there the principles of Jesus are active as two-edged swords.

### *Self-Reverence*

First among these is the principle of self-reverence. All the temptations prevalent in this group of amusements are repugnant to a man's best thought about himself as Jesus would have him think it. Life to Jesus is a gift so sacred, so exalted in its possibility, that self-reverence is as natural as hunger or thirst. It is a primary law of individual life.

The reasons for self-reverence for any man are many. The sheer mystery of the human energy that leaps in his blood and tingles in his muscular power is reason enough. But more than this there is in every man an unearned investment of human life and value. The labor and sacrifice of those who brought him forth and set him on his feet have in a real sense sanctified him. "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price." He has been made the trustee of great resources of human value. All the strong fiber of a man's life, his good instincts and natural integrity, have been put there by costly forces. Any due appreciation of what he has cost—the unearned increment that is in his life—ought to give a man reverence for himself. And then the sheer possibility of his life for evil makes a man stand in awe of himself. No one is sure enough master of the lower nature to dare to foster those things of which Jesus says:

> That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man. —Mark 7: 20-23.

On the other hand the sheer possibility of his life for good makes a man stand in awe of himself. All that a man may do with his life these days while war is still to be hated and fought, civilization to be redeemed, vast peoples to be touched with the message of Christ, and social justice yet to be established! What may a man not do with a life? His own possibilities make him stand in awe of himself.

Now in the thought of Jesus nothing else of his own is so sacred to a man as his inner spiritual life, his natural impulses controlled and guided to their highest expressions. It is the throbbing life within that counts. "Why, what does it benefit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit *his life?*"

"One thing is yours you may not spend:
Your very inmost self of all
You may not bind it, may not bend,
Nor stem the river of your call.
To make for ocean is its end."
—*Henrik Ibsen,* "Brand."

*Reverence for the Personality of Others*

Reverence for the personality of others is also an ultimate principle with Jesus, a basic law of human association, the secret of all high relationships. The lack of it is the central fact in all these temptations. All the time without fully realizing it, we tend to look upon other persons as modes of action, or forms of value, advantageous to ourselves or otherwise, rather than as human beings, sensitive like ourselves. In some relations we think of another person as so much labor power, so much of a resource in time of need, so much of an influence with the powers that be. In social relations we are tempted to think of another as so much of a means of pleasure, so much of a quickener of agreeable sensations. Selfishness and the prevalent commercialism of our life are all the time deepening this tendency and robbing us of much of our instinctive human feeling. We forget how significant and sacred other people's lives are to themselves, and our failure in this realization of the sacredness of another's personality shows at its worst in these temptations of social relationship. The other person tends to become just a means of selfish pleasure, merely a quickener of agreeable sensations.

Reverence for personality runs away back to the sense of awe with which, at a birth or a death, we stand before the elemental mystery of personal identity. It demands the high art of looking at another's life as if it were our own—the gift of actually imagining how it feels to look out upon life from under the eyebrows of another. It commands us to stand in a holy silence before the secret inner life of another, in an awe that is all the deeper if that life be one

of hidden struggle crowned with some measure of victory. This is Jesus' answer to that hurt of delicate perceptions which is present to some degree in all human association, the principle of reverence for personality.

We need in America today a rebirth of chivalry. We need a rebirth of reverence on the part of men for women, a deepened reverence in personal relationships. In the temptations of this group men are usually the aggressors and it is these very temptations involving laxity in intimate relationships which are especially dangerous to women. In extreme forms of the modern dances the lack of reverence for personality shows at its worst. This is especially true in that the woman's reverence for herself is often lowered or lost, and both are willing to accept the pleasure of an intimacy, the normal results and responsibilities of which they shun. The cheapening of personality and the loss of self-respect are the inevitable result, for the central principle of social morality, as Jesus sees it, has been trampled under feet. "One only degrades his friendships when he measures them by the number of liberties he takes, the number of privacies he rides over roughshod." The joy of life vanishes when personality is profaned, but ever abides with those whose intimacies are pure. They who reverence each other know a spontaneity and joy in their companionships which license never understands. They taste the ever deepening joys of an intimacy which knows no shame or bitterness, and in which familiarity breeds no contempt, for it is founded upon reverence for personality. "To the pure all things are pure."

### *Clean and Reverent Speech*

Fundamental in the exercise of Jesus' principle of reverence for personality is clean and reverent speech. Vulgar and profane talk breaks down the dignity and mutual respect of any companionship. Jesus has specific things to say about conversation. More than once as he went along about his business he overheard the nasty talk of men who lingered at

the corners of the streets. It stirred his deep abhorrence. "That which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man," he says, for the words that proceed out of a man's mouth are the accurate index of what the man is.

So easy is the slip of the tongue, the "unruly" member, into loose and hurtful talk, that he counsels those to whose petty conversation he was forced to listen—"I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." So great is the danger, that he counsels the most direct simplicity and sincerity of speech, "Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay." Will Carleton's Hoosier poetry is to the point.

> "Boys flying kites pull in their white-winged birds,
> You can't do that way when you're flying words.
> Careful with fire is good advice we know,
> Careful with words is ten times doubly so.
> Words unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead,
> But God himself can't kill them when they're said."

Jesus thinks of a word as a spiritual force and the man who sets it free is responsible for the good or evil which it produces. "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Words to him are given for holy uses. They are to be radiant with beauty, shedding abroad the priceless truth-about-life in the midst of social relationships. Of his own words he said: "They are spirit and they are life."

*Self-Control*

In all the thought of Jesus upon reverence for one's own personality or that of others there is implied the need of self-control. If a man must go to the length of cutting off a hand or plucking out an eye rather than let them cause him to stumble, then self-control of the firmest sort is demanded. Jesus' teachings and life are in utter opposition to the laxness, the license, and the sensual mood which characterize these amusement enterprises. His men are ever to hold

themselves in leash and ready on the instant to match themselves to any duty.

Self-control is not mainly a virtue of restraint. It is the virtue of a high self-direction. It is above all the virtue of poise, of calm and fearless action in the face of danger or temptation. Jesus demands of his followers a whole life of self-control, which means a life of unbroken fortitude in the achievement of high ends. Any habit, such as liquor drinking, that interferes with that life, that weakens resistance power, lowers physical vitality, breaks down moral stamina, multiplies crime and insanity, releases the lowest passions of men, inflames the high suggestibility of women, and in the end reduces both men and women to degradation, must be in opposition to these basic principles of reverence for personality and self-control. Acting upon those same principles, many thoughtful men and women are seeking their social recreations in other forms of pleasure than in the modern dances where many of the temptations already indicated manifest themselves even in the most guarded social life. Upon these same principles also the tobacco habit is now being avoided or laid aside by many thorough-going Christian men.

It is a striking appeal which Paul makes for persistent self-control:

> Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body. —I Cor. 6: 19, 20.

> The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, *self-control;* against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.—Gal. 5: 22-25.

*The Sacredness of Friendship.*

Perhaps the most far-reaching degradation of the social impulses to be found in the amusements of the social rendezvous group lies in the substitution of chance acquaintance, careless and often sensual relationships, for fine and enduring friendships. Jesus brings, therefore, the challenge of the Sacredness of Friendship.

Intimate personal friendship with its instinctive privacy is a charmed relation in his eyes. In its completeness between men and women it is the living center of all relationships and gives the crowning answer to the social impulses. Jesus was peculiarly a friendly man. One thinks of him as seldom apart from people save when he went alone with God to renew the sources of his power. Ever revered and yet accessible, gracious and companionable, he stands in contrast to John the Baptist, austere and forbidding, a man of the wilderness. Jesus was a man with friends, men and women who loved him, who lived close to him and shared his confidence. The whole story of his public ministry is a chronicle of friendship: the power of his personality upon his disciples; their willingness to leave their means of livelihood and follow him in a wandering quest, the purpose of which they could not comprehend; the series of shocks and surprises by which he brought them to an understanding of himself; his turning his back on popular favor that he might give his best to them in retirement, and fitting them at the cost of infinite patience to perpetuate his undying message of good will. At the end of his life when the betrayal and the denial, those tragedies of friendship, are before him, he is still supremely the unfailing friend. Those chapters of the fourth Gospel which have found the deepest of all responses in the human heart are the message of one who in his last hours poured out the affection of his soul for the men who had been in the inner circle and through them for all mankind. It was his supreme desire that they might find his secret of joy.

> These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you. Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye may love one another.—John 15: 11-17.

Jesus rests his hope of the achievement of a perfect social order upon friendship. It is his method of social transformation, as daring as it is simple. He relied upon the individual to communicate ideals. Friendship is the means of that communication. Friendship was his method of social transformation—the power of the contagion of character in intimate personal relationships. Upon this method hung the success or failure of his mighty enterprise that must go on growing ever larger after his friends should see him no more. Friendship to Jesus, therefore, is charged with the deepest significance—is alive with sacred possibilities. He had the daring to expect that men long after his death and far away from Palestine would find in him a buoyant friend. To all men everywhere he seemed to be saying, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

The message of Jesus is full of the intimacies of life. They are so sacred in his eyes that he builds his interpretation of the universe upon them. A mighty friendship, human and divine, knitting men and women together in a holy order and binding them to God—this is the ideal of his Kingdom. His theology is family theology with divine parent-

hood and childhood its essential characters. But there can be no effective family theology and no enduring family institution unless the perennial friendships of young men and women ripen into love and marriage in wholesome purity.

Friendship that reaches the highest levels is no whimsical relation of caprice or momentary attraction of one person for another. Any friendship worthy of the name rests upon laws as sure as the laws of the physical universe. The four-fold basis of this relationship has been declared to be: 1. Integrity, breadth and depth of personal character. 2. Some deep community of interests. 3. Mutual self-revelation and answering trust. 4. Mutual self-giving.

These are the laws of friendship, and no laws are crying out for obedience in America today any more than these high laws. Innumerable relationships of men and women that might be beautiful and enduring are marred and blighted because of ignorant or wilful failure to fulfil these principles.

Jesus in the beatitudes uttered the qualities essential for successful friendship. He based it on character. No character means no friendship worthy of the name. It is a striking fact that these essentials of friendship are also requisites for "blessedness." Every one who possesses these gifts of character is "highly favored" and has entered the life of enduring joy.

> Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely,

> for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.—Matt. 5: 3-12.

In his "Laws of Friendship" President King says, "It is impossible to review these qualities for which Christ calls in the Beatitudes and not see that where these qualities are present, a worthy and steadily growing friendship is certain. Where friends are teachable, quick to recognize their own defects, having the meekness of self-control, and persistent eagerness for the best that friendship may bring; where inner sympathy and deep reverence for the persons of themselves and others are present, where each is a promoter of peace, and each is ready to sacrifice for the other—there is a friendship that it is hardly possible to wreck." [1]

Clearly, therefore, the atmosphere of these amusement resorts means the suffocation of friendship. A real friendship cannot exist there. So delicate and instinctively sacred are all genuine personal confidences, so dependent are they on mutual trust and reverence that vulgar jokes blight them, looseness in relationships wilts them, and the atmosphere of licentious pleasure withers them up. Such influences, wherever they exist, limit life, make it superficial and flighty, intensify selfishness, undermine personal integrity and degrade the finest social impulses. It is doubtful indeed if friendship could find a more poisonous atmosphere in which to breathe than that of an amusement resort of this type. Jesus squarely opposes the sacredness of friendship to these temptations wherever found in social life and Paul speaks as if directly to those who are drawn aside by these dangerous enchantments.

> Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*—Rom. 13: 13, 14.

[1] Henry C. King, "The Laws of Friendship," p. 99.

## Daily Readings

1. Self-reverence varies with different men and rightly so. How quickly dissipation destroys it and yet any man, however degraded by drink or the exploitation of others, may be reawakened to it. Obviously it is a matter of the will, and self-reverence deepens as self-improvement increases under the leadership of Christ. Have I wholly "put on the new man"? How have I helped other men to self-reverence and self-control?

> Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness . . . anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.—Col. 3:5-14.

2. I am valuable. Why? For what has been given to me, for what I can do, or for what I have done and am doing? Might I not greatly increase my value to all my friends this week if I would but make the effort. Some of them need what I alone can give. Permeating all the thought of Jesus is this sense of the incomparable value of human life.

> Are not five sparrows sold for two pence? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows. —Luke 12:6, 7.

3. Dare I pay the price of caring for the best in my acquaintances as Jesus cared for it? "For their sakes I sanctify myself," he said. Find here Jesus' unique sense of the sanctity of human life. He who knows himself to be the messenger of God yet holds himself more sacred for the sake of his friends.

Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one.—John 17:17-22.

4. "But why are we so glad to take our turns to prattle,
When so rarely we get back to the stronghold of our silence
With an unwounded conscience?
Our talk is often empty, often vain.
This comfort from without
Is no small enemy to that from God which speaks to us within.
So we must watch and pray,
For fear our days go idly by."

—*Thomas à Kempis.*

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one.—Col. 4:6.

If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.—James 1:26.

5. How perfectly Jesus' sense of reverence for womanhood spoke when he said:

> He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground. And they, when they heard it, went out one by one, beginning from the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst. And Jesus lifted up himself, and said unto her, Woman, where are they? did no man condemn thee? And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more.—John 8:7-11.

6. Here unite the high self-reverence of Jesus and his reverence for those whom the world heeds least of all. His message for all mankind is born of that union.

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
> —Luke 4:18, 19.

7. The friends of Jesus and the friends of Paul throughout the world are now innumerable. Is it not fair to suppose that they knew the secret of permanence in personal relationships? How far do these words go in helping to maintain friendship at its best?

> If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods

> to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.—I Cor. 13: 1-8.

## Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

*What is the effect on character of the repression of the social impulses?*

*What are the leading features in public amusement resorts which tend to degrade the social impulses?*

Why is the commercialization of sociability so dangerous?

In what specific ways does liquor drinking intensify these dangers?

How is the atmosphere of "a good time," "this is the life," "he is a good spender," etc., created by commercial management? How does such an atmosphere in a social rendezvous break down moral integrity?

Are the same influences present in college dances, smokers, and other social affairs? Have any of these crept in through commercial influences?

*What are the most significant principles of Jesus in relation to these tendencies?*

How does thorough-going reverence for the personality of others alter one's relationships? Does it increase or decrease the pleasure of social life?

Can one be at the same time "a good mixer" and self-reverent, safeguarding all the intimacies of life.

Why is it so difficult for fine friendships to develop in an atmosphere of easygoing familiarity.

What specific results would you like to see achieved in America to-day through a rebirth of chivalry.

*How can the principles of Jesus in relation to social amusements be effectively incorporated in college life.*

To what extent do the differences in the temptations of different persons make self-control an individual matter? A social matter?

What can any group of college men do to stop indecent and profane speech?

Has the normal impulse to express one's happiness in social motion, as seen in the spontaneous dancing of children, been diverted from its true expression in modern round dancing?

Do you see any fundamental difference between modern round dancing and square dancing? Which is the more fun?

How may one test his friendships by Jesus' ideals?

What are the laws by which they can be made to stand the test?

To what extent is a Christian man justified in expressing his social impulses in a public social rendezvous?

What reconstruction in college social life would be wrought if Christian men and women courageously followed Jesus' principles?

How far are Christian students in any college corporately responsible for the Christianizing of social recreations?

CHAPTER V

# THE BREAK-UP OF FRIENDLY ATHLETICS AND THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE

## *Friendly Athletics: Their Place and Value*

The wide extent and deep significance of amateur athletics is not appreciated by those who identify them solely with college football, baseball, rowing, and track games. The comparative importance of college athletics has been greatly exaggerated, and the college man is prone to see them almost wholly from his own point of view. A far wider field opens when we consider all the ways in which the American people find recreation in manifold athletic exercises which return to those who participate no other pay than pleasure.

These activities, instinctive and irrepressible as they are wherever young people come together, are to be recognized as a national asset of immense value, for they all minister to health and efficiency, to sociability and cooperation, and are often more profoundly educative than formal instruction. The meaning of loyalty and basic morality enters the very fiber of American youth through well conducted athletics. Both their moral and mental values are now recognized. Schools and colleges are awake to their broad educational significance, and instructors who are regular members of the instructional staff are usually in charge. In many institutions all students are required to take up some form of athletic exercise. Intercollegiate, interscholastic and interclub athletic leagues of many sorts cover the country like a network, bringing enormous numbers of young men into healthful competitive sport. Among the most important of these are the public school

athletic leagues of the larger cities. These play interscholastic games in all the chief sports, and enroll thousands of boys in over 170 of the larger cities.

Amateur athletics reach their most spectacular form in college and university matches, especially football, baseball, rowing, and track games. The so-called "big games" have become national amusement events of the first order.

## *Influences that Break Up Friendly Athletics*

The morals of athletics, in comparison with other phases of the amusement situation, are wholesome and refreshing. They are, in fact, less a phase of the problem than an effective solution of it. There are, however, certain tendencies, even in amateur athletics, which are far from encouraging. The chief moral dangers enter in the temptation to win at any price, which frequently leads to dishonesty. This emerges in the temptation to cheat, to indulge in that which is protested against upon every boys' playing field in the shout, "Play fair." Cheating threatens all the mutual understandings of the game. It should be clearly set off from those forms of legitimate deception which are a part of the game itself, as in the difference in football between the effort of the center to steal ground by setting the ball forward from the place of the last down while the officials may not be watching him, and the legitimate effort to deceive the opposing team as to what the next play is going to be. The one is reprehensible cheating, the other is the expected strategy upon which the excitement of the game depends.

This temptation shows itself chiefly in two ways: To cheat within the game itself, as illustrated above by stealing large or small advantages in violation of the rules; or to introduce into the game those who have no right to be there under the rules agreed upon—those who are out of the class of other participants because of age, weight, size, superior ability, professional experience, or some other disqualification. This happens most frequently in the secret introduction of a

player of superior ability for pay or other valuable consideration.

The practice of dishonesty in athletics results from the "win at any price" policy, and is a confession of weakness. It brings secret shame even if one is not detected, and the additional shame of exposure if one is caught in the act. It implies an instant readiness to break the contract implied in the gentlemen's agreement; a spirit of anarchy in respect to the laws of the game, and results in the searing of a man's own conscience, the degradation of the ideals and practices of younger players, the creation of an atmosphere of distrust and bitterness; and the entering wedge for the habits of graft and stealing and forgery.

Next door to the hiring of players is the temptation to bet on the game. Both express the spirit of commercialism in relation to sport. They should be seen as parallel factors, for the spectator who bets on the game is brother to the player who secretly sells his ability. An honest recognition of this fact would do much to stop betting on amateur games, for many men are willing to bet on their friends who would be ashamed of them if they ruined amateur sport by secretly taking pay.

Betting prevails widely in connection with athletics, both amateur and professional, and not infrequently enters into the management of events. It is essential to realize that there is no fundamental moral distinction between betting and gambling, and that small indulgences in these temptations are of the same essential moral nature as those larger indulgences which sweep men on into the gambling mania, reducing careers of promise to failure and happy families to misery. Wherever the gambling spirit has its way with men, there prevails a feverish instability of character, business uncertainty and failure, blighted homes, lotteries in church and state, people reduced to poverty and debt, save a few more skilful and crooked than the rest who fatten upon them. The desperation incurred by losses in betting and gambling is a quick instigator of violence and crime, while

the recklessness encouraged by easy-won money can but lead to extravagance, excess, and profligacy. Betting and gambling thus get men coming or going, winning or losing, attacking with deadly certainty all the basic motives and fine reliabilities of character.

A further temptation incident to amateur athletics is that of anger and personal animosity—to let a friendly game degenerate into a half-hidden or possibly free-for-all fight. It is well to realize how high is the standard which amateur sport has set itself when it requires men to go into the sharpest physical contests and yet maintain their self-control and gentlemanly courtesy. The degree of fighting by jaw and fist which manifests itself in any game is a fairly accurate indication of the character of the players and the degree to which these ideals of amateur sport have been understood and achieved. One ought to be very candid about the temptation to anger. It sticketh closer than a brother to most of us, and is certainly a "natural" temptation, especially to those who are "quick-tempered." It is felt by many to be an unavoidable weakness for which they are not really responsible, and is looked upon as an established fact of temperament inherited from their ancestors and very largely beyond their own control. Valid excuses for uncontrolled anger seem easy to make, especially if, as in boxing, for example, one is injured or intentionally fouled by his opponent. All the elemental and instinctive forces of a man's nature flare up in rebellion. Animosity and retaliation seem to be almost unavoidable reactions. It seems "perfectly natural" to let one's self go. But what happens when one does let himself go? What happens when anger, animosity, retaliation, and hatred work their will? Any man who has followed athletic history for a few years knows the answer: bitterness between two men—blows are struck, men take sides, the fighting spreads through the teams, their adherents join in, men "let go" fast and furiously, injuries are given and received. Suppose no one intervenes—some one is fatally injured, death results. Murder is the climax of unrestrained anger.

Closely allied to anger is the temptation to brutality. It shows itself in the direct effort to "put out" a good player by spiking him or injuring him in a vital place, or in the attempt to win by injuring as many men as necessary on the opposing team. It shows in the attitude of a portion of the spectators as well as players at certain games, men with whom excitement seems to stir the mood of brutality as certainly as it quickens a flood of profanity. Anyone who listens to the epithets hurled at the players by this part of the crowd—"kill him," "murder him," "put him out," and the like—will realize, of course, that they are irresponsible remarks not meant to be carried out, but they represent nevertheless a brutal mood which can but have its effect on the players and which needs only a sufficient provocation to bring the crowd onto the field, with all the possibilities of mob action.

This temptation to brutality shows at its worst in the established institution of personal brutality—prize fighting. Here these tendencies work out to their logical conclusion in participants and spectators alike. A mood of hardness is in the very atmosphere of the occasion. Personal animosity between the fighters always sharpens the fighting and the interest. A "knock-out" is the goal of the fighter's training and hope, the pinnacle of the fight-fan's joy. The worst forms of vice go along with this sort of brutality, for it is not the brutality of primitive men who err in the sudden angry use of superior strength, but the sordid brutality fostered by the commercialization of sport.

## *The Principles of Jesus in Relation to These Temptations*

In opposition to all these tendencies which fasten themselves to the good of athletics stand certain fundamental principles of Jesus.

### *Honesty*

Over against the temptation to cheat stands the principle of

common honesty. The honest man is the man of veracity in action, a doer of the truth, who will not lie or steal or cheat. The dishonest man, the sneaking man who cheats—he is the scared man; Jesus sets him in sharp contrast to the man of daylight who is liberated from fear.

> For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.—John 3:20, 21.

Paul writes again and again of the Christian life in athletic figures, and always implied in what he says is the soundness of Christian honesty, as in:

> Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses.—I Tim. 6:12.
>
> Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. —Eph. 6:10, 11.

Honesty often brings its own reward in athletics in striking contrast to the results of dishonesty. In a football game, for instance, the moral drama of theft, detection, trial, condemnation, penalty, and disgrace may be enacted in two minutes. That is one of the incalculable moral values of athletics, and makes obvious the necessity of having the principle of absolute honesty ingrained in one's nervous system, for the athlete has no time to "think it over." He must act instantaneously, almost automatically. The inwrought habit of honesty in athletics, therefore, is at one with accuracy, quickness, certainty, and success. It works for the man who works with it. The great basic moral laws of Jesus as manifested in honest play are always in accord with physical laws. The union of the two in a man's life goes

a long way toward victory. Spontaneity and "fitness" are not to be separated from the habit of honesty, for as he said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

*Freedom from Recklessness and Cupidity*

The chief moods to which betting makes its appeal are the mood of recklessness and the mood of cupidity.

The beginning of the reckless mood in gambling lies in the desire to "chance it" a bit, to "take a flier on how it's coming out," or to back up a statement by showing your willingness to risk the loss of money on the truth of your position or the accuracy of your prophecy. Betting and gambling may begin with no great recklessness—with little more than a desire to add a new thrill of sensation to one's experience—that low motive which dictates participation in many forms of pleasure; but recklessness steals on with inevitable certainty as the mania of losing or winning works in a man's character. Betting frequently involves also the attitude of "put up or shut up," which is only a cocky mood of foolish pride.

Over against this mood of recklessness, which not infrequently goes so far as to involve men in financial ruin in a single night of play, Jesus brings the mood of earnestness and a sense of the infinite potentiality of all a man's acts and attitudes. Over against the heedlessness of consequences in the gambling mood, he cries out to his men again and again, as he sees them stumble amid the laws of life: "Take heed, take heed." The interminable possibilities of good and evil leaping out from deeds and attitudes, these make life thrilling and significant. The mood of recklessness in the midst of these possibilities is, therefore, the mood of moral anarchy, the antithesis of that sense of responsibility which is with Jesus so distinguishing a quality. Jesus, who stands for such a view of the sacredness of human life as is written in his words: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. . . . Ye are of more value than many sparrows," moves in a

world of motive and purpose which is at the farthest remove from the mood of recklessness.

Betting and gambling depend on the risking of money or money's worth. What are money and money's worth? Clearly they are stored-up value, the product of human effort, the result of labor or human need, the coined accumulation of activity. Money, therefore, is in a real sense personality, fluid personality. This truth brings into operation all the fundamental laws of Jesus as to reverence for personality, for no man who incorporates in his life this principle will do despite to himself or anyone on whom he is dependent by recklessly risking the product of his labor.

Gambling and betting depend also upon the mood of cupidity, of inordinate desire for gain. Gambling for its own sake is the perfect expression of the commercialization of a life. The habitual gambler is the living embodiment of that love of money which is the root of all evil. He represents the complete distortion of the values of life as Jesus sees them. Easy cash in hand and stored away is the height of his desire, the object of his activity. Jesus says "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Any man who makes a "winning" and feels leaping up in him the mania to get money without honest labor, to take it by chance, is already hypnotized by cupidity and will shortly find himself the servant of mammon. Before he knows it, says Jesus, he will commit the sin of the complete distortion of values and fall to despising God himself.

### *Self-Control and Forgiveness*

Any real facing of the results of anger in athletics is a sobering process. The singular fact about this so-called "natural" temptation is that it knows no voluntary stopping place till it has worked its brutal will. It adds fury to fury, blinding the judgment, and disregarding the results of the actions which it commands. It has meant through the history of mankind not merely bitterness, wrath, malice, and brutality between man and man, but blood vengeance, feuds, the ex-

termination of whole families, tribes, and vast populations in wars that knew no other way to end. It brings with it all the long train of woe and degradation that follows war. Anger looks like a sorry business when one thinks it over. Jesus had apparently been thinking it over and going to the root of it when he said:

> Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.—Matt. 5:21, 22.

That passage is a puzzler to most men till they think out the natural consequences of unrestrained anger. Then it clears up, for he is reminding us that anyone who so loses his reverence for personality as to call a brother an imbecile, which is the tragic opposite of a personality, has lost his judgment, and is likely to let himself go completely. He will thus incur the heaviest penalty.

It is interesting to discover the point at which Jesus says this process of anger must stop, the point to which it is safe to let it go. There was a well established theory about it prevalent in his day. He put his ideal right along side of it.

> Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . . Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. . . . Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.—Matt. 5:38-48.

Obviously the point at which anger must be stamped out is the very point at which it begins. Not a second's toleration, else it may shout out a curse or strike a deadly blow. Jesus can never forget the terrible chain of consequences that may follow like an explosion of dynamite the slightest fanning of the flame.

And what an ideal it is he sets! Literally the highest and hardest possible. He expects of his followers the same quality of perfection as that of God himself. His pictorial way of putting it clinches the point and leaves no loop hole for this wily bandit of anger to get through. Go right on playing the game! It isn't safe to get mad even for a minute! Let him hit the other cheek if he wants to! Give him the chance! The chances are he won't do it—it takes a pretty low scoundrel to hit a man a second time who doesn't hit back! But whatever happens you'll win out in the end! Keep your head! Play the game! Don't forget that murderous chain of terrible consequences! This is the only way to keep free of it!

Jesus frankly admits it isn't the natural human way to do—no, but he does say it is the Godlike way to do! It is just the sort of treatment you expect from God, and just the sort of treatment he gives you in his marvelous forgiveness. It is that sort of paradoxically "unnatural" action which turns the bitterness of the world into peace, puts a stop to war and lifts men into the comprehension of those vast processes of divine love, which are the manifestations of God at work in human life, which alone bring in the new social order. Jesus goes the limit of the perfect paradox when he says, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you"; but he also says God does it too. He requires nothing that he does not exemplify, and the sublimity with which Christ himself forgave the enemies who railed at him after they had nailed him to the cross has compelled the instinctive admiration of the world. All the way through his life he held aloft this stern requirement of his great ideal—an absolute necessity in the new social order in which men are to live together in

peace and beauty of mutual helpfulness. It is the eternal necessity of forgiveness, the perfect antithesis of personal animosity. "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven."

Now this exalted standard does not mean that personal injustice and intended injury are to be utterly ignored. Far from it. That would be to obliterate the power of distinction between right and wrong, justice and injustice. The ideal set by Jesus has to do only with the way one is to take injustice, the way it is to be handled. To handle it at all involves recognizing it for what it is. Jesus therefore suggests a way to clear up a matter of personal injustice which may remain even when one has not hit back and has no bitterness in his heart.

> And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.—Matt. 18: 15-17.

Paul suggests that God with his larger vision of human life can better dispense justice than we. It is clearly an excellent plan to let him do it.

> Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. —Rom. 12: 17-19.

Victory in athletics is absolutely dependent on the quality of self-control which is necessary for forgiveness, says Paul,

whether it's running or boxing or any other game. "Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things."

The self-controlled man, says Jesus, enjoys himself as he goes along, keeping his temper. He gets to see the humor and the tragedy of men's flaring up at each other all the time like gamecocks or bulldogs. He takes a good-natured hand at calling them off now and then. "Blessed," says he, "are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Over against all brutality of whatever sort Jesus stands in majestic opposition—the Man of Poise and Gentleness. He could no more authorize anger than he could authorize war, for angry blows are to personal relationships what war is to the social order. He hated both with a perfect hatred—sources of murder and anarchy that they are. Theirs is the power that sets back the Kingdom, and ever the inner urge with Jesus was, The Kingdom of "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men," *must be established.*

## Daily Readings

1. "Bad blood" between athletes is far too frequent. Evidently there was bitterness among those to whom John wrote the first Epistle. The sin of hatred is much on his heart. What does he set over against it all through his letter?

> If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.—I John 4: 20, 21.

2. "You're a good waiter, old man." How valuable to the athlete is his poise, his ability to bide his time?

> Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love.—II Peter 1:5-7.

3. Is gentleness of spirit to be identified with ladylike demeanor? "The humblest man I have known is a certain big policeman—a giant of a fellow whom every evil-doer fears and little children love."

> Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful.—Col. 3:12-15.

4. The author of the Hebrews had in mind an ancient stadium full of spectators at a great running race when he said:

> Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.—Heb. 12:1, 2.

5. Some Christian men on athletic teams wield every possible influence to get themselves elected to the captaincy. They know how the man in the parable felt when they lose out. How do they feel when they win by such methods?

> And he spake a parable unto those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke 14:7-11.

6. Some college men who couldn't catch an easy pop fly are first to criticize the second baseman for missing a stiff grounder. The same men "knock" the captain instead of supporting him. How deep down into character does that attitude run? Jesus makes an illuminating comment on this habit.

> Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.—Matt. 7:1-5.

7. Back of brutality in athletics, in business, in labor strife, and war, lies the spirit in the hearts of men that produces it. How well James knew that spirit and its opposite.

> But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This

wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.—James 3: 14-18.

## Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

*What are the chief values which come from friendly athletics? To those who participate? To society at large?*

*What are the leading influences tending to the breakup of friendly athletics?*

How far does the habit of cheating affect the reliability of a man's play? That of his team mates? His opponents?

What sort of influence is exerted upon an amateur team by the presence of a secretly paid professional?

In what ways does betting foster professionalism?

Does the man who bets on the game stand on the same moral basis as he who secretly sells his playing skill?

To what extremes is anger in athletics likely to lead?

To what extent is the policy of "win at any cost" responsible for the evils of athletics?

*What principles of Jesus are most needed in athletics?*

What has a man's Christianity to do with the way he acts as a spectator?

What psychological contributions does honesty make to athletic efficiency?

What are the chief reasons why the Christian man should not bet?

In what ways is good team play an expression of Christian spirit?

How stiff a test does Jesus set for the control of anger?

*What are the fundamental points of emphasis in a Christian athletic policy?*

In what ways are "athletics to win" incompatible with Christianity?

What alterations in college athletics would be necessitated by the application of Jesus' principles?

Would public opinion among students support a thoroughly Christian policy? Would opposition be most likely to come from players, coaches, or student body?

Which policy in athletics makes the larger contribution to college loyalty—an "athletics for all" policy, or the present intercollegiate system? Which to college morality?

In what ways can a Christian athlete influence his college for righteousness?

CHAPTER VI

# THE CONTAGION OF CROWD INFLUENCE AND CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY

## *The Influence of the Crowd*

This is an element of deep significance in every type of amusement, but shows most conspicuously in special amusement places and events where great masses of people so throng together that the prevalent state of mind approximates or becomes crowd-consciousness. No single feature of our study is more worthy of consideration than this influence of great numbers of people upon one another—the laws of crowd contagion as they affect conduct and character. They need to be carefully studied to arrive at a full understanding of the issues involved, but it must suffice here to quote as follows:

"The crowd self is immoral. To be sure, it is capable of courage and generosity, even of honesty. The crowd is emotional and some of its emotions may be moral. On the whole, however, the virtues grow on an intellectual stalk. Right conduct is thought-out conduct. Conscience is a way of thinking things. Now thronging paralyzes thought, and while the crowd may be sentimental and heroic, it will lack the virtues born of self-control—veracity, prudence, thrift, perseverance, respect for another's rights, obedience to law. Essentially atavistic and sterile, the crowd ranks as the lowest of the forms of human association." "Feelings, having more means of vivid expression, run through the crowd more readily than ideas. To the degree that feeling is intensified, reason is paralyzed. In general, strong emotion inhibits the intellectual processes. In a sudden crisis we expect the sane

act from the man who is 'cool,' who has not 'lost his head.' Now, the very hurly-burly of the crowd tends to distraction. Then the high pitch of feeling to which the crowd gradually works up checks thinking and results in a temporary imbecility." [1]

The individual under crowd control is thus described:

"We see, then, at the disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the turning by means of suggestion and contagion of feelings and ideas in an identical direction, the tendency to immediately transform the suggested ideas into acts; these, we see, are the principal characteristics of the individual forming part of a crowd. He is no longer himself, but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will. Moreover, by the mere fact that he forms part of an organized crowd, a man descends several rungs in the ladder of civilization. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd he is a barbarian, that is, a creature acting by instinct. An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand amid other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will." [2]

## *The Contagion of Crowd Influence in Special Amusement Places and Events*

The successful amusement park is the very stronghold of the crowd spirit. Witness your own sensations in the calm light of a solitary morning visit to such a park after a crowd has left it dishevelled from a night of feverish revelry. It is this same spirit which frequently dominates the street carnival, the celebration of holidays, especially the Fourth of July, and many athletic celebrations, excursions, outings, and county fairs. Every promoter of an amusement resort or event knows well enough that his enterprise is doomed to failure unless he "gets the crowd"—unless he can work up

[1] E. A. Ross, "Social Psychology," pp. 56, 46.
[2] Gustave Le Bon, "The Crowd," pp. 35, 36.

the "carnival spirit." It is essential to recognize that crowd consciousness is often thus deliberately worked up and used by commercial exploiters solely for a maximum financial profit. The average unsupervised amusement resort is indeed a spectacular expression of the commercial spirit dominating the people's play. The universal presence of the gambling mania at race track parks is indication enough of the crowd contagion there. Almost every temptation present in other phases of the Amusement Problem is present in those special resorts and events, and the virtues needed there are peculiarly needed here, for the average amusement resort in full blast is merely a jumble of all sorts of commercial offerings poured into one place, just as the street carnival is a like jumble poured into one space of time. It is the combination of offerings in glittering ensemble which creates the distinctive characteristics and the distinctive temptations. Among the moral dangers already treated, those of the Social Rendezvous group, temptations of personal intimacy are especially aggravated here by the ease with which the innocent under multiplied and insistent suggestions can be seduced into intoxication and immorality in the space of a few hours, and the whole gamut of illicit relations foisted upon them. The powers of contagion and suggestibility are at their maximum. The sale of liquor and immorality are often at their worst. The virtues of self-reverence and self-control, purity and reverence for personality, are put to the severest test under such circumstances, and many "first lapses" from virtue are traceable to these resorts or events.

The distinctive temptation of amusement resorts and events, therefore, is to be swept along with the crowd into doing that which one would not do save for its presence—to throw caution to the winds, "to let yourself go," to throw privacy over to promiscuity, "to be a good mixer," and "to go the limit," whatever degree of excess that may mean to any superheated individual. It is this temptation which is perfectly expressed in that song of basic immorality, the refrain of which is, "Cheer, cheer, the gang's all here. What the ——

do we care now." That is precisely the attitude which throws on the emotional power for the execution of any suggestion which may get possession of a muddle-headed crowd consciousness.

The special amusement event in addition to the crowd temptation brings with it a distinctive temptation of suddenness. It is the unexpected suggestion catching the unwary and suddenly undoing him which needs careful study here. Many times a special holiday is planned by a family or group of young people. A journey is determined long in advance. Money is saved. Flamboyant advertising whets the appetite. Work is rushed on the day before, leaving nervous tension and weakened resistance power on the day itself. When the great day comes habitual actions are abandoned and one is thrust into a new set of conditions and influences in which he has little experience or established habit to guide him. Dazed with blinding lights, freedom, and money to spend, there follows a steady pelting of solicitations to feel new thrills of pleasure in variegated "stunts" and side shows, to drink, to gamble, and to indulge in immorality. The suddenness of it all, the unexpectedness of the situation which develops, the crowd spirit, and ignorance of the results of yielding—these have given to many special amusement events the deadly power to launch a boy or a girl on a life of evil and to scar the memory of countless men and women with the hateful recollection of unintended sin. This is the distinctive danger of athletic celebrations and similar functions in college communities.

In relation to special amusement events it is in place to consider the prevalent use of Sunday as a special amusement day. Sunday is the record day of the week at Coney Island and similar resorts. Sunday baseball draws enormous crowds in many cities. Sunday breaks the record at the motion picture shows, and often at the public dance halls. The atmosphere which pervades amusement offerings on Sunday is little different from that which prevails on week days. More than this it is necessary to recognize the truth presented in

such statements as these: "Sunday is to a great extent, for city children at least, a day of lawlessness and demoralization. . . . Sunday is at present the especial day for the planning and carrying out of mischief and law breaking in various forms, and in particular it is, among city boys, very largely devoted to gambling. Whatever the explanation may be, Sunday is, as a matter of fact, for great numbers, if not the majority of our children, a radiating center of evil tendencies for the entire week."[1] This generalization is doubtless almost equally true for adults, for it is evident that the general popular use of Sunday widely misses the mark of the Christian ideal.

From the point of view of this ideal the outstanding temptation of amusements in relation to Sabbath observance is that the day shall be robbed of its distinctive character and special joy. It is the easy tolerance of a mood which keeps one from worship, from the vital process of the rediscovery of one's worth and meaning in the world. The atmosphere of certain hours of the Christian Sabbath, hallowed through long centuries for this experience, may as easily be kept unworshipful by trivial idling as by boisterous pleasures.

It is, however, in the widespread temptation to make the Sabbath a special day for amusement rather than a day of special joy which is the temptation closest to our present study. There is a sharp difference between the mood of Christian happiness and the prevailing spirit of commercialized amusement. While it is true that within certain limits the whole question is more one of the mood and attitude with which one seeks his recreation on Sunday, the atmosphere he shares and helps to create, than of the specific place to which he goes or the things he does, still the temptation is everywhere sweeping through modern social life to make the Sabbath merely a holiday—a special event with all the typical characteristics present.

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[1] Joseph Lee, "Sunday Play," President's address delivered at Fourth Annual Congress of the Playground Association of America, *Mind and Body*, April, 1911, pp. 75–82.

## *The Principles of Jesus in Relation to These Temptations*

### *Independence and Personal Integrity.*

Over against all weak-kneed following of the crowd, Jesus puts his demand for a life of fundamental independence and personal integrity. Face to face with mob mind or crowd suggestion a man is to be a whole man with his best powers of mind and conscience in absolute control. Jesus builds his reliance on human nature, upon the dominance in his men of their "primary self." The weaker and the baser suggestions from without as well as the weaker and baser men within them are to stand back at the behest of the strongest man of their manhood.

"The primary self is the self with personality and will. It is, as it were, a synthesis of all one's experience. It alone embodies the results of reflection, and it alone holds life to a personal ideal. It is the captain of the ship. When it is able to fight back the mutinous crew that swarm up from the forecastle—the appetites and passions—and to hold the ship to her course in spite of side winds and cross currents—suggestions from without—we have a character. If now this primary self is overthrown or put to sleep, the subwaking self becomes master of the ship. This self has little reason, will, or conscience. It has sense, appetite, emotion, intelligence but not character. It is imitative, servile, credulous, swung hither and thither by all sorts of incoming suggestions. The life it prompts cannot be stable, self-consistent, integrated. It is low on the scale of personality, and a situation that commits to its hands the helm of the individual life is fraught with disaster." [1]

This "primary self," these inner fastnesses of personality, were always at the focus in Jesus' thinking. Inwardness of life, independence of praise or ridicule, fearless following of the inner leadings instead of the outer suggestions, superiority to crowd dominance, however sharp and lonely the

[1] E. A. Ross, "Social Psychology," p. 27.

struggle—these are essentials with him who feared not the face of any crowd though "they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him, crucify him," though "they railed on him, wagging their heads." How clearly he sets forth this necessary independence and coherence of character when he says,

> Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. —Matt. 12: 33, 35.

Inwardness of life in the thought of Jesus, however, is never for the sake of mystical contemplation or thrills of ecstatic emotion. Inspiration with Jesus is always functional. An exalted vision reveals how much there is to do. Courageous action is the normal result of strong coherence in the inner life. Only by positive independence and bold opposition to evil can one detach himself from insidious suggestions to participate in pleasures worked up by the commercial instigators of crowd action. No passive resistance is safe. An assertive courage alone suffices.

His superiority to the worst manifestations of crowd frenzy is shown in the hour of his utter extremity when he prayed with that majestic poise of spirit which he never lost: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Jesus expects of his men likewise that they shall pay the price in following his principles.

> Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.—Matt. 7: 13, 14.

Paul was not missing the spirit of Jesus when he wrote:

> Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.—I Cor. 16: 13.

> For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage.—Gal. 5:1.
>
> Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel.—Phil. 1:27.

Anyone who seeks to follow after these ideals, and yet finds himself in a place where evil suggestion and the crowd spirit bring the sense of shame and begin to sweep him off his feet, must act instantly with fearless independence. He may indeed be called upon to oppose all his friends as he bravely follows the leading of the voice within.

*Preparedness and Reserve Power.*

Jesus expected his men to be ready for sudden temptation. They were not to be caught off-guard. The sense of the urgency of the Kingdom was to be ever upon them.

> Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord.—Luke 12:35, 36.
>
> We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.—John 9:4.

Some of Jesus' most telling parables have to do with these essential virtues of forethought, preparedness, resourcefulness, which are so closely akin to independence and coherence of character.

> Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But

at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.—Matt. 25: 1-13.

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.—Mark 13: 33-37.

In the untold agony of the garden, with the weight of the Kingdom crushing him to the earth, his best loved men still misunderstanding him, and unprepared to carry on his message, he yearns to find one man alert, prepared for the vigil, ready at the time of crisis with reserves of character.

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.—Matt. 26: 40, 41.

*The Sabbath a Day of Special Joy.*

What sort of a special day was the Christian Sabbath meant to be? After his Baptism and Temptation Jesus comes

back to his old home town and in one simple act reveals both his habit in regard to the Sabbath and the principles which should settle mooted questions in regard to it.

> And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,
>
> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
>
> —Luke 4: 16-19.

Manifestly his habit was a reverent observance of the Sabbath day, and accorded with the custom of his friends and neighbors save where that observance clashed with his own higher principles of duty. These higher principles are those by which he works for the achievement of the new order as indicated in his social program above. Jesus put human welfare above every other consideration in the observance of the Sabbath.

> And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.—Mark *2*: *27*.

This is "the principle that the Sabbath was not an end, but a means to an end. That end is man—his real interests and needs. He repudiates all rules which place the Sabbath above human interests or make it a hindrance rather than a help to their promotion." [1]

[1] G. B. Stevens, "The Teaching of Jesus," p. 54.

The position of Jesus is clearly one of fearless independence whenever he considers that the welfare of man is jeopardized by conventional rules in regard to the observance of the day. This independence brings him into sharpest clash with the religious leaders of his nation.

Observance of the Sabbath was reduced to an absurdity.

"The point at which the rabbi was most sensitive was Sabbath observance. He had wrought out the simple Sabbath law of the Mosaic legislation into innumerable and sometimes absurd details. Tailors must not carry needles on their coats late Friday afternoon, lest the sun should set before they noticed it and they be carrying burdens on the Sabbath; the physician might take measures to prevent a serious disease from growing worse on the Sabbath, but must not try to cure it; minor ailments might not be treated at all. The rabbis went so far as to say that God had created man for the sake of his Sabbath law." [1]

Jesus' pungent sense of reality and his love for suffering men and women set him in the sharpest opposition to all this perversion of righteousness as these men were forever discussing it and stickling on tiny points. His independence and their antipathy can be seen clearly enough.

> And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there who had his hand withered. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man that had his hand withered, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored. And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took

[1] E. I. Bosworth, "Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ," p. 34.

counsel against him, how they might destroy him.
—Mark 3:1-6.

It is a striking fact throughout the gospels that Jesus stands consistently on the side of liberality and freedom in the matter of Sabbath observance. His position should not be misinterpreted as being one of laxity on that account. He was standing for a fundamental principle, for the highest welfare of men and women when that welfare was threatened by a legal system of rigid exactions. There may be puritanical ideas and ill conceived Sabbath laws against which he would react as vehemently to-day, but it is at least an open question whether the problem now confronting his followers is not the threatening of their highest welfare by the prevalent carelessness and laxity. It is well to keep carefully in mind the situation he faced as one seeks to interpret for himself these principles of Jesus, and so to observe the Sabbath day that his own highest welfare and that of others is served. This principle of the highest human welfare as the chief guide in Sabbath observance seems to require the values achievable through worship and meditation, through service to other people, and through rest and recreation.

The values of *worship* are high values to his men. Worship is no mere formal matter of church attendance. It is a vital process. It brings a man face to face with God and the meaning of life for a season that he may discover himself anew in the purpose of the Kingdom.

"There is another use of Sunday analogous to church going, and usually a part of it; namely, recollection in the sense of the Italian word *racogliamento,* the re-collection or re-assembling of the soul. In every stream there should be now and then a pool in which the hurry and the noise ceases and we can see into the depths. Sunday is the day to allow the dust to settle, and look around, to pull ourselves together, observe our bearings on our more universal relations, note the variations of the compass, and lay out our course anew. Such a periodic reassembling is necessary to the integrity and per-

manence of life, to the cumulative value of character. Sunday is a renewal, a refreshing of the primal sources of our life. . . . Sunday is the day of re-visiting the ancient shrines, for going back to the fountains of our strength." [1]

The Sabbath then means worship, first of all, this "reassembling the soul" in the presence of God. This is the day of days for building integrity, for deepening one's own spiritual independence over against all crowd contagion and the conventional judgments which beset one through the week. This is the day above all others when reserves of spiritual strength are to be stored and the high virtue of preparedness achieved. It is not by chance that Jesus received his exalted vision of life and announced the program of Christianity when "he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: *and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day.*" The habit of worship runs through it all.

Secondly, the habit of *service* is clearly indicated as a part of Jesus' way of ministering to the highest human welfare on the Sabbath day. This great dominating principle of his life, the superlative joy of creating joy for other people, is to have large place in the Sabbaths of his men. He does not forbid them to carry burdens on the Sabbath, but enjoins them to carry other men's burdens and so fulfil the law of joy. If one reads with imagination he can but sense the happiness that radiated from the Capernaum synagogue on that strange and memorable Sabbath when a man with an unclean spirit was brought back to wholesome sanity again; and a fevered woman was restored to calm in the cool freshness of his presence. It was his holy love of human life uttered in a Sabbath deed. Service is the clue to Sabbath joy. "Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?" "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."

Thirdly, the broad principle of Jesus, safe-guarding the well-being of man, expressed in "the sabbath was made for man,

[1] Joseph Lee, "Sunday Play," *Mind and Body:* April, 1911, pp. 77-81.

and not man for the sabbath," indicates his accordance with the immemorial use of the day as one of *rest and refreshing.* The day is to be a day of cessation from ordinary labor. Rest does not require cessation from activity. But it does mean release from monotony and grinding toil, freedom to escape the narrow round, to breathe deep in God's good out of doors, to let both body and mind range freely over the hills and valleys of life with something of sweet abandon. He who so loved the waving grain and wells of living water, the lilies by the upland paths and deep recesses of the silent woods, spent many a Sabbath afternoon, as he would have his men pass them, in fellowship with nature. More than once at sunrise or its setting he stood, alone, in silent worship upon a little hill over against the sky. He who was the incomparable friend, stole away often with one or two, as he would have his men do, for times of deeper understanding. He who built his whole interpretation of the universe upon the intimacies of family life, and cherished her who bore him with chivalric love unto his final agony—how often must he have disappeared to be again with her "in Nazareth where he had been brought up." And there was a house in Bethany whither he went forth out of the city to lodge at night throughout the passion week—a house in which he was at home. He who was ever thrilled by the pure spirit of play in the hearts of children must often have fared forth with them on Sabbath afternoons in joyous company through the fields of Galilee.

True recreation is part of the Sabbath joy. Wherever the mood of worship and the mood of service are, there the mood of recreation is not likely to lead away from the distinctive quality of the day. There surely is nothing in the principles of Jesus barring out vigorous physical exercise. There is no justification in the teaching of Jesus for the conception of rigid solemnity and inactivity held by many even in a day when the conception of many more has shifted to that of making Sunday only a holiday with no vestige of worship or service left in it. Participation in some form of

rigorous exercise may be the precise thing needed for the well being of many men and women confined within doors at mechanical pursuits throughout the week. Wholesome recreation clearly has its place in Jesus' conception of the Sabbath day, but it will not be frivolous or boisterous play. It will not have an undue share of the day. It will be at one in spirit with worship and the service of human need.

Jesus' mood of Sabbath observance, therefore, is a free mood. He would not bind his men by rules. It is the day of the spirit of man. They are to catch his spirit. They are to seek their highest human welfare and that of all men in this best day of all the week. Worship, service, rest, and refreshment, these are the clues by which all those who enter in shall find it good and make every Sabbath memorable as a day of special joy. These are the ways in which reserves of integrity and preparedness are to be stored up against the unexpected hour of crowd contagion.

## Daily Readings

1. "He's got the crowd with him, all right." Popularity brings hard tests to any man. Dare I go against the crowd?

> And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee. And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth.—Mark 1:36-38.

Think of Jesus' attitude in this crisis. Fame and popularity waited for him. His chosen men called him. The crowd would be with him. But as he turns his back on them all he seems to see a vaster company rising up from among all peoples, calling him for to-day to lonely preaching in the little synagogues of Galilee.

2. Thousands of companies are writing insurance to-day against sickness, accidents, tornadoes, fire, storms at sea, and many other contingencies. But nobody insures against loss of morals. A man has to carry his own risks on that.

> Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh. —Luke 12: 35-40.

3. Many college men are careless in their confidences, sometimes making known to those who are mere strangers the inner secrets of life. Not so with Jesus! So sacred is the inner fastness of a man's life that prayer and service alike must be guarded from publicity. Only in secret can independence and integrity come to full strength.

> And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.—Matt. 6: 5, 6.

4. Not by a crowd, but by one girl, this man's integrity was put to flight!

> And as Peter was beneath in the court, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and saith, Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus. But he denied, saying, I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. And the maid saw him, and began again to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. But he again denied it. And after a little while again they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilæan. But he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And straightway the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word, how that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.—Mark 14:66-72.

5. Do you look for the coming of the Son of man in clouds and glory, or does he come daily into every group of men and women, dividing them asunder on the basis of the choices they have made and wrought into character? What crises of life could I meet to-day without loss of faith or poise of spirit?

> And they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left. Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall

find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath.—Matt. 24: 39-47.

6. Paul seems to have had experience with a weak-kneed lot of Christians. Have I ever once had the courage to fight out a moral issue as he fought out this one?

Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works: of whom do thou also beware; for he greatly withstood our words. At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.—II Tim. 4: 14-18.

7. As one ponders the way in which ceremonialism has ever cumbered religion, blighting its spontaneity, he is thankful that Jesus sided with all the prophets who have pleaded for mercy and justice above all else.

At that season Jesus went on the sabbath day through the grainfields; and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and ate the showbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? But I say unto you, that one greater than the temple is here. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have con-

demned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath.—Matt. 12: 1-8.

## Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

*What are the moral characteristics of a crowd?*

What happens to the individual who becomes a part of a crowd?

*What are the chief moral dangers involved in crowd contagion?*

What are the similarities between crowd consciousness and intoxication?

Why are all amusement temptations particularly dangerous in a crowd?

By what tricks do commercial amusement promoters work up the carnival spirit?

In what ways do these manifest themselves after the big athletic events in college life? At amusement parks? In special events? On Sundays?

What are the differences between Sunday amusement and Sunday recreation?

In what ways have Sunday amusements affected the religious life of the nation?

*Why must the Christian be especially alert in respect to crowd contagion?*

To what degree are Christian independence and inwardness of life synonymous with loneliness?

What is the chief principle of Jesus in regard to Sunday?

In what ways did Jesus leave to the individual conscience of his followers the question of Sabbath observance?

What significance should be attached to the fact that Jesus' utterances in regard to Sabbath observance are on the side of liberality?

What special safeguards against crowd contagion can be provided by the Christian uses of Sunday?

*What is a Christian man's attitude toward crowd contagion?*

How can a man make sure of doing right in spite of the crowd?

What attractive qualities of character come out in opposing crowd contagion?

Is it immoral to allow yourself to be swept off your feet by the crowd contagion following an athletic victory, or in the throng on a city street on election night?

By what means can crowd enthusiasm after a college victory be diverted from drinking and immorality to the service of college loyalty?

Can a Christian man have a good time at a commercialized amusement resort?

What sources of happiness are especially accessible on Sunday to those who hold the Christian ideal?

CHAPTER VII

# CHRISTIANITY AND THE PUBLIC PROBLEM

## *The Christian Awakening*

Is it enough for Christianity to guide the attitudes and participations of individuals, or has it still a further task before it? Suppose it were able to lift the personal amusement choices of millions to highly moral levels, would it have done the whole of its duty? Could it then safely ignore the public situation and leave other millions, including a multitude of the young, with their unformed judgments and inexperience, as easy prey for exploiters? This, in a sense, is what organized Christianity has done, and the evils of the present situation are in no small measure the result. Christianity has been and is a profound ministry to individuals—on that we are now agreed—but is that a reason why it should not be effectively social also? Does Christianity really buttress and support effective social action? We have seen the need of a public awakening to all the facts of the problem; to the evils of professionalism, commercialism, and immorality. We must now find what power Christianity has both to stir public opinion and to keep the public conscience steadily energized to do its duty. Is the widespread lethargy and inertia in relation to this and other social problems a result of Christian teaching or a denial of it? Is the comparative ignorance of these matters on the part of many Christian men and women a virtue or a sin? How far can Christianity be relied on to solve the public problem?

## *Jesus Holds to Revolutionizing Ideals of Society*

We have but to turn to the teaching of Jesus to find that

he is never satisfied with things as they are. Over against the social conditions or the conventional standards of any age or nation his ideal principles stand in clear contrast. He rebelled against the accepted standards of his own age and people. The framework of the Sermon on the Mount is a charter of revolution. Again and again he reiterates the words, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you." Over against the formalized ethics of his nation he sets his own great principles of life, just as he sets them over against the negative prohibitions of ecclesiastical bodies in regard to amusements to-day. Always, now as then, Jesus stands for positive principles rather than negative rules. In no destructive spirit, but ever seeking to "fulfil," he attacked the law as insufficient, the scribes and Pharisees as content with half truth which had become untruth, and the temple ceremonies as polluted by those that bought and sold. His eager desire was to see things always growing better, and still better.

Walter Rauschenbusch has well said:

"There was a revolutionary consciousness in Jesus, not, of course, in the common use of the word 'revolutionary,' which connects it with violence and bloodshed. But Jesus knew that he had come to kindle a fire on earth. Much as he loved peace he knew that the actual result of his work would be not peace but the sword. . . . This revolutionary note runs even through the beatitudes where we should least expect it. The point of them is that henceforth those were to be blessed whom the world had not blessed, for the kingdom of God would reverse their relative standing . . . Jesus was not a child of this world. He did not revere the men it called great; *he did not accept its customs and social usages as final;* his moral conceptions did not run along the groove marked out by it. . . . It is an essential doctrine of Christianity that the world is fundamentally good and practically bad, for it was made by God, but is now controlled by sin. If a man wants to be a Christian, he must stand over against things as they are and condemn them in the name of that higher conception of life which Jesus revealed. If a man is

satisfied with things as they are, he belongs on the other side." [1]

How significant it is that Jesus did not accept the customs and usages of his times as final, that his life and teachings abound with such incidents as the rebuking of Simon the Pharisee, his host; the parable of the man advised to take the lower seat; the cleansing of the temple, and the washing of the disciples' feet. These, and many other incidents, reveal both his free participation in social life and his independence in regard to established usages. Do they not give us full warrant for believing that we may find his principles revolutionary in respect to the amusement situation of to-day, professionalized, commercialized, and tainted with immorality as we have discovered it to be?

## *Jesus Relies Upon Individuals*

Secondly, Jesus relies on individuals to effect the reorganization of social life. In this he discovered a distinctive method for the achievement of social control. He rejected Oriental methods such as physical force and the power of pomp. He rejected the Roman methods—armies and organized government. He rejected the method of Moses—a system of laws. He rejected the method of the Greek philosophers—a formal system of thought. Jesus works always through individuals. The person is his unit of action. The power of personality is to him like yeast in meal or light radiating from a central flame. His best effort went, therefore, to imparting truth to a few disciples, to the illumination of a few personalities. A more daring method could hardly be conceived—no army, no seat of government, no laws, no books, no publicity—nothing but the pure power of the truth in love injected straight into the lives of his followers to be radiated through the social organism, age-long and world-wide.

[1] Walter Rauschenbusch, "Christianity and the Social Crisis," p. 90.

Jesus does not put his reliance upon either of the main forms of action used by others in efforts to solve the amusement problem. He himself does not rely upon restrictive legislation, though doubtless he expected his followers to use it. Nor does he rely on organization. "In short, instead of regeneration by organization, Jesus offers regeneration by inspiration. He was not primarily the deviser of a social system, but the quickener of single lives. His gift is not that of form, but that of life."[1]

Doubtless he expected his followers to make use of organization and group action, but he lays upon the individual far more responsibility than membership in any organization involves—the full responsibility for the utmost use of his own life-multiplying power. The quality of a Christian's purpose must therefore be constantly purified to Jesus' ideal lest that which he communicates to others be evil rather than good.

"Jesus," says Rauschenbusch, "worked on individuals and through individuals, but his real end was not individualistic, but social, and in his method he employed strong social forces. He knew that a new view of life would have to be implanted before the new life could be lived, and that the new society would have to nucleate around personal centers of renewal. But his end was not the new soul, but the new society; not man, but Man."[2]

If the teaching of Jesus reveals such a method and ideal as this, may we not justly hope for solutions of this highly personal problem, born within the hearts and consciences of Christian men and women—for fundamental solutions able to obliterate the evils which have fastened themselves upon so many forms of play? Courageous, right-thinking individuals, devoted to the highest moral welfare of society, are exactly the contribution needed here, and it is the first and fundamental business of Christianity to produce them. Acting

[1] F. G. Peabody, "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," p. 90.

[2] Walter Rauschenbusch, "Christianity and the Social Crisis," pp. 60–61.

both as individuals and as groups, such men and women have long been leaders in efforts to transform existing society into the Christian social order, to achieve on earth the Kingdom of God.

## *Alertness in the Detection of Evil*

Was Jesus' approach to social transformation that of a teacher only, or did he himself go into the battle for public righteousness?

How sharp and clear is the answer of his life? Let his own terrific invective, as he publicly challenged the men who wielded authority, reveal the fearlessness of his public strife.

> But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you Pharisees! for ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces. Woe unto you! for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not.—Luke 11: 42-44.

His times of teaching were constantly interrupted by the public battle, and he was forced again and again to take his chosen men away into retirement. Alert and wary as he was, his enemies sought in vain to catch him in his talk. Elusive as he was, they sought in vain to take him. As long as he chose he held them at bay. Through all the years of his public ministry he revealed the power of sharply detecting evil, accurately diagnosing the sources of injustice, and waging a relentless war, the stakes in which were, on the one side his own life, and on the other side, the establishment of the Kingdom. In all reverence let it be said that Jesus "knew the game" in the public fight for righteousness and never gave quarter to evil, though he prayed forgiveness for the men who fought him.

Alertness in the detection of evil is a requisite in Christian

character—the detection of public evil no less than personal sin. What else can Jesus' instruction to his disciples mean when he said to them, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them." "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Luke 12:35-40).

How clearly, therefore, Jesus makes high demand that Christian men and women be alert and watchful against all these forms of evil. Yet it is not a high demand of Jesus alone. It is an immediate and practical necessity, for no Christian home can be wholly safeguarded in these days from the common influence of commercialized amusement. A stern duty, therefore, faces every Christian man and woman, young and old—to meet the need for more Christian detectives, more fearless and sharp-eyed thinkers among Christians, men and women who can detect the cloven hoof or the forked tail at a glance and brand every vicious allurement in commercial amusement for what it is.

This is no easy task. Professor Ross has made the nature of it clear in "Sin and Society," where he says: "The sinful heart is ever the same, but sin changes its quality as society develops. Modern sin takes its character from the mutualism of our time. Under our present manner of living, how many of my vital interests I must entrust to others! Nowadays the water main is my well, the trolley car my carriage, the banker's safe my old stocking, the policeman's billy my fist. . . . But this spread-out manner of life lays snares for the weak and opens doors to the wicked. Interdependence puts us as it were at one another's mercy and so ushers in a multitude of new forms of wrong doing. The practice of

mutualism has always worked this way. Most sin is preying and every new social relation begets its cannibalism. . . . But the tropical belt of sin we are sweeping into is largely impersonal. Our iniquity is wireless, and we know not whose withers are wrung by it. The hurt passes into that vague mass, the 'public,' and is lost to view. . . . The public being leaden of imagination is moved only by the concrete. It heeds the crass physical act, but overlooks the subtle iniquities that pulse along those viewless filaments of interrelation that bind us together. . . . As society grows complex it can be harmed in more ways. Once there were no wrongs against the whole community save treason and sacrilege. . . . Now, however, there are scores of ways in which the common weal may take hurt, and every year finds society more vulnerable. Each advance to higher organization runs us into a fresh zone of danger, so there is more than ever need to be quick to detect and foil the new public enemies that present themselves. . . . Upon the practicers of new sins there is no longer a curb unless it be public censure. So the question of the hour is, Can there be fashioned out of popular sentiment some sort of buckler for society? Can our loathing of rascals be wrought up into a kind of unembodied government, able to restrain the men that derisively snap their fingers at the agents of the law? . . . The supreme task of the hour is to get together and build a rampart of moral standard, statute, inspection, and publicity, to check the onslaught of internal enemies." [1]

It is obvious that the task of effective alertness in the detection of evil in amusements is a task of far-reaching difficulty, and involves the branding of new forms of sin, new devices of exploitation and insidious old evils freshly rouged with a beauty not their own. It involves accurate thinking about influences which pass into "that vague mass, the 'public,'" and do not emerge until long afterward or far away in the records of divorce courts, the broken health

[1] E. A. Ross, "Sin and Society," pp. 3-4, 11-12, 34, 36-37, 75, 90.

of men who once gloried in their strength, and the multitudinous record of crimes the first motives of which are beyond the power of any jury to unravel. Not until Christian men and women fulfil this high demand of Jesus to think out the "subtle iniquities that pulse along those viewless filaments of interrelation," will Christianity make its full contribution to building the "rampart of moral standard" in this supreme task of the hour.

To nothing but the shameful lethargy of Christian men and women is attributable the following statement from a public commission in a great American city upon the completion of a vice investigation. The Committee recommends as most important, "A radical change in the amusements we tolerate, in public opinion, in our treatment of sex problems, in our economic system, in the attitude of the church, and in the teaching and influence of the home itself."

How can any Christian man doubt the validity for his own life of that which is both a practical necessity and an exalted principle of Jesus—alertness in the detection of evil? What social task in America to-day is a sharper challenge to Christianity than the quickening of the public conscience on this highly personal social problem? It is one thing for public opinion to be stirred; it is another thing for it to be expressed in effective action. The one is quick and easy, the other is slow and hard. What sort of public action does Christianity support? Does it support restrictive action, constructive action, or both?

Christianity supports and energizes restrictive action in the principle of

### *Exposure and Opposition to those who trip up others*

Implied in what has been written of Jesus' demand for alertness in detecting evil is the coordinate duty of opposing evil. This is the war for which his sword is drawn. This is the Holy War, the only war for which Christian men and women are enlisted, and the term of service is for life.

Typical of Jesus' fearlessness in opposing those who trip up others is his cleansing of the temple.

> And they come to Jerusalem: and he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; and he would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple.—Mark 11 : 15, 16.

Of how many modern cities, in which are thousands of his professed followers who are "at ease in Zion" while a few fearless men and women bear the brunt of attacking entrenched evils, would he say as of old:

> Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.—Matt. 11 : 21.

Through all his years of battle there breathes no personal hatred for the men whom he opposed, but rather an overwhelming sense of the enormity of their crime who exploit and degrade human life. His sense of the sacredness of life breathes through all his hatred of its exploitation. It is this which speaks in his terrible figure, "Whosoever shall offend one of these my little ones, even these least, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Clearly Jesus used and supports all sound restrictive action, for without it the very forces of evil which he so vigorously opposed have right of way to work their will.

## *Service: The Creation of Joy for Other People*

Christianity also supports and energizes sound constructive action in the principle of service.

Those who think through the underlying difficulties involved in the amusement situation come to realize that the active forces of evil are by no means wholly responsible for them all. Many of them run away back to the barren leisure in the lives of young people, especially working girls and boys and those who live in isolation in the country; to the arbitrary dictation or neglect of many well meaning parents, who fail to provide sympathetic counsel, suitable places, and fit recreations for their sons and daughters; to the ignorance of basic facts which is the condition of vast numbers who are flung, in their early teens, into the turmoil of city life; to the dependence of girls upon their men acquaintances for many forms of amusement; and to the failure of home and school, church and community to provide such a positive and attractive program of recreation as will bring all young people to that leading out of personality which true recreation provides.

Over against all such difficulties as these the fundamental need is constructive action; a wider and deeper and wiser service in the full creation of happiness and joy in the lives of all the people—this, with all that it involves in personal transformation, in public education and social reconstruction, is our superlative task.

A host of active efforts are already put forth in the mood of such constructive action. Matched to every phase of the problem are movements and institutions which are rightly viewed as contributing to the constructive use of leisure time, the substitution of good for evil influences, the wise and sympathetic guidance of personal choices on high levels and in the provision of wholesome recreation amid morally clean associations which make for the true expression of the normal impulses in spontaneous happiness. All sound constructive effort has the full support of the Christian teaching in its basic principle of service, for surely these are human needs and the business of Christianity is the service of human need.

The principle of Service permeates the New Testament

through and through. It dominates the life of Jesus from beginning to end, calling him on from village to village, teaching, preaching, and healing all manner of diseases. Nothing else had a right to precedence in his life above the service of human need. All such highly personal needs as these of which we are thinking made an especially sharp and deep appeal to Jesus as, "When he saw the multitude he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd."

The constancy of his yearning over humanity is voiced again and again as in his words:

> Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.—Matt. 11:28-30.

His final tests of men are tests of service, and he leaves no room for doubt that both the fundamental purpose of his own life and that which he expects of his followers is the full communication to others of health and strength and happiness, both physical and spiritual. He crowns such service with the superlative joy of the same approval as if it had been rendered to himself.

> Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee

> sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.—Matt. 25 : 34-40.

Even the smallest service in the creation of joy for other people cannot miss of its reward, for it may have unsuspected significance.

> And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward.—Matt. 10 : 42.

In a profound sense of the word Jesus lived his life for the creation of joy. His followers are called to be *creators of joy* in the heart of all mankind through the love of him "whose service is perfect freedom."

## Daily Readings

1. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations.—Matt. 24 : 14.

What a world transforming conception this has been! What supporting forces have made possible its present extent? What forces are now required?

2. In what sense of the word can Jesus' ideals be called revolutionary?

> Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called

least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. 5: 17-20.

In what ways have his ideals already revolutionized American amusement conditions?

3. Matched to Christianity's power to minister *to* individuals is its reliance *upon* individuals. Jesus makes the test as stiff as possible.

> Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?—Matt. 16: 24-26.

4. Independence, alertness, opposition to those who exploit others—how could they be better exemplified than here?

> And he said, Woe unto you lawyers also! for ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you! for ye build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. So ye are witnesses and consent unto the works of your fathers: for they killed them, and ye build their tombs. . . . Woe unto you lawyers! for ye took away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. And when he was come out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: laying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth. —Luke 11: 46-54.

5. He fleeth because he is a hireling and careth not for the sheep.—John 10: 13.

What presupposition of all Christian service is implied in these words? How does Jesus personify it?

> He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them: he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.—John 10: 12-15.

6. What principle precedes and supports the principle of service to one's fellowmen?

> And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.—Mark 12: 28-31.

Is the second commandment likely to be obeyed where the first is neglected?

7. What spirit does Christianity require in those who seek to enter into the service of human need?

> And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal

life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother. And he said unto him, Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth. And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.—Mark 10: 17-22.

## Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

*What is the relation of Christianity to the public problem?*

Which is the more effective in improving the amusement situation—wider understanding of Christian principles or increased public action?

Was Jesus more fundamentally interested in individuals than in society?

What justification is there in the attitude of Jesus for believing that Christianity can transform present conditions?

What is the relative importance of individuals and organizations in improving the amusement situation? Which does Jesus emphasize?

How far will such public problems as popular amusements solve themselves if all Christians live lives of private righteousness?

How far is the man who refuses to be a Christian detective a party to the evil which he might help to stop?

What are the difficulties in the social process of branding new sins in amusements?

Does opposition to those who trip up others make inevitable a certain amount of personal animosity toward them?

Does restrictive or constructive action have the larger support in Jesus' principles and action?

Are some people temperamentally incapable of sharing in

a fight for public righteousness and therefore to be excused? How many ways are there of sharing in such a fight?

Is more demanded of a Christian than personal uprightness and alertness in opposition to those who stumble others? What responsibility has he for being a creator of other people's joy?

Is the bruising of human life by the forces of evil the final basis of appeal for Christian service?

*What amusement evils in our college do Christian principles compel us to oppose? What constructive efforts do they suggest?*

CHAPTER VIII

# MAKING PUBLIC OPINION EFFECTIVE

## *What is Already Being Done*

The principles of Jesus clearly demand on the part of his followers such a grappling with the public problem of amusements as is indicated in Alertness in the Detection of Evil, Opposition to Those who Trip up Others, and Service. How then shall the Christian fulfil his public obligation as well as his private duty as he seeks to incorporate in his life the principles of Jesus? What shall he do to wield his utmost power for righteous community life?

It is reassuring to remember that the battle is already on—that many Christian men and women are working side by side with others in efforts to improve conditions. Their efforts will help all students of the situation as they seek a wise direction of their energies; therefore we briefly review the chief expressions of public opinion in restrictive and constructive action in relation to each main type of amusements.[1]

## *The Dramatic Group: Restrictive Action*

In relation to dramatic amusements, restrictive public opinion has placed among the ordinances of many cities an enactment prohibiting indecent exhibitions; and many cities are extending the license system to cover all forms of dramatic enterprises.

[1] For a fuller discussion of these restrictive and constructive efforts, see Part II of "Popular Amusements," where full reading references to descriptive books and periodical articles will be found.

In the matter of motion pictures, restrictive public opinion has found an effective expression in the National Board of Censorship. Early in the development of motion pictures their possibilities for evil as well as good were recognized, and the action of a few far-sighted men and women in forming this Board has had an effect of the utmost importance in safeguarding public morals by an efficient cooperation with the manufacturers of films. Their report of January 1, 1913, indicates that "during the past year at least ninety-eight out of every hundred films publicly exhibited in America have been previously inspected by the Board." [1]

Perhaps no other group of men and women of equal size has done as much for the morals of recreation in America as the members of this Board, for the significance of motion pictures in the national life of to-day is difficult to overestimate.

## *Constructive Action*

There have recently appeared spontaneous movements in several cities for freer and finer expressions of dramatic art. They are protests against the commercialization, the bad taste, and the bad morals of much recent drama. Such are The Drama League of America, The Drama Society of Boston, The Chicago Dramatic Society, and the drama departments of women's clubs. A number of high-class companies are fighting the same battle in devoting themselves to the best drama at risk of financial loss.

The Drama League of America, which now has 90,000 affiliated members, is a national organization with a national program. It has not aimed to establish a censorship of the theater. Its object, on the other hand, has been "to crowd out vicious plays by attending and commending good plays and building up audiences for them through study classes, reading circles and lectures; to aid in the restoration of the drama

[1] "Report of the National Board of Censorship of Motion Pictures," January 1, 1913.

to its honorable place as the most intimate, the most comprehensive, most democratic medium for the self-expression of the people."

There is in America a wide, spontaneous interest in amateur dramatics which, although unorganized, is nation-wide. It expresses itself in plays presented by little groups of drama lovers in every type of community, from the smallest villages to the most crowded parts of Chicago and New York. Sometimes acting the plays of the great dramatists, sometimes producing plays of their own, these little groups are centers of dramatic enthusiasm. They are frequently quite independent organizations in community life, but more often spring up as clubs or societies in a school, a settlement, a college, or a university. Their very spontaneity, rising up as they do locally, makes them a true expression of the nation's love of drama independent of the commercial theater—a bit of fundamentally constructive action. Their acting, whatever its quality, is their own and a real expression of their love of art. This means freedom and democracy in art, and in the end good art as well as sound morality. When true to the amateur spirit, these groups stand for a fine correlation of all the agencies necessary to the production of a drama, high-minded authors, managers, players, and audiences.

Privately endowed or municipal theaters are a further effort to improve theatrical conditions. They are intended to serve as institutional centers for the cultivation and expression of dramatic art, where a local school of actors and playwrights may be developed.

### *The Social Rendezvous Group: Restrictive Action*

Here the license and inspection system is the most effective means of control. A rapidly increasing number of cities, recently estimated at 158, have adopted ordinances dealing with public dance halls and incorporating such distinctive features as the prohibition of the sale of liquor and immoral dancing, preventing the issuance of return checks so that

saloons and immoral places may not be utilized during the dancing period, reasonable closing hours, and forbidding the attendance of minors under eighteen unless accompanied by parent or guardian.

## *Constructive Action*

Constructive public opinion in relation to the problems of the social rendezvous group affirms the validity of impulses to sociability just as it recognizes the place and power of the dramatic impulse. It sees in the present congestion of home life in cities, in the abnormal conditions under which great numbers of young people are forced to work and play, the underlying causes of the evils emerging in public dance halls, cafés with amusement features, and similar resorts. It affirms that the widespread breakdown of character which occurs in these places is due less to inherent moral defects than to the rapacity of liquor dealers and the profit-seeking management of amusement enterprises. It points out the need of safeguarding every phase of social life from exploitation and of counteracting the evils of loneliness, over-crowding, fatigue, and barren leisure. It exerts itself against promiscuous sociability, and endeavors to make adequate provision for safer social pleasures.

This type of public interest expresses itself in a varied provision for social life in churches, settlement houses, Christian Associations, social and recreation centers, and the like.

The social life connected with churches of all denominations is a fact of primary importance when seen in relation to this problem. Those who desire the solution of social problems do well to remember that there are in this country 218,147 churches with a membership of more than 35,000,000. This means organized social life of the utmost significance.

In the churches the family group is still the natural unit, and great numbers of young people in city and country meet for social pleasures under the best conditions. The importance of this democratic yet safeguarded social life can hardly

be over-emphasized. If the churches were to utilize to the full their natural advantages for the extension of their social activities and reassert with new power their established opposition to class distinctions and their historic emphasis upon the life of joy, they could take the lead among the constructive agencies active on this phase of the problem.

The social settlements, now numbering approximately 413 in the United States, have pointed the way toward solutions of the problem by establishing in congested districts their attractive neighborhood houses, open and inviting to the varied interests of the people. Social clubs and classes of every sort that find a response in the people's sense of need are offered and made as independent and democratic as possible. Varied opportunities for social life are provided.

The Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations have rapidly increased to the number of 2,357 for young men in the United States and Canada, and 949 for young women in the United States. These Associations make an important contribution by their provision of dormitory life and social opportunities. Their attractive buildings contain facilities for various gymnasium activities and other games, lectures, concerts, amateur theatricals, and friendly gatherings. They help to create and maintain standards of social morality.

The Young Men's Associations are in direct competition with pool halls, and "hang-outs" for men, and the reported use of City Association buildings or rooms by 625,598 members in 1913 indicates the effectiveness of their rivalry.

The significance of the many leagues, fraternities, and social clubs for men, and likewise the National Guard as a social organization, should be fully appreciated.

The movement for the wider use of school buildings has rapidly assumed national significance, 71 cities in 1912-13 reporting paid workers in charge. These buildings are already owned by the people themselves in their corporate capacity, and represent in the aggregate vast sums of money which are yielding annually but a fraction of the return which the community may justly expect from them.

The recreation features of social centers vary, of course, with the character of the community, but usually include such activities as public lectures, literary and musical clubs, handicraft or domestic science classes, athletics, game rooms, reading rooms, neighborhood nights, old fashioned sociables, and dancing parties, all conducted under supervision.

The development of folk dances and the like in the settlements and recreation centers is the most specific effort of recent years to restore an appreciation of the dance as a form of art, and to offer a corrective to excesses in the modern dances.

All of these agencies, however, are far from adequate to meet the situation as a whole. Many groups of young people have little or no relation with any of them, and conduct their social affairs in public halls rented for each occasion.

The cultivation of private social parties properly conducted should indeed be recognized at its full value. However important may be the contribution of the agencies described above, they can do little more than point the way toward solutions of the problem. The social recreations of the people will continue to be for the most part financially independent and conducted by selective social groups. Even in the poorer districts of the larger cities, these groups will continue to be socially independent and self-sustaining.

### *The Athletic Group and Special Amusement Places: Restrictive Action*

In relation to athletics, restrictive action is taken through the careful rules and regulations drawn up by the various leagues and clubs, both amateur and professional. Disorderly conduct among spectators is subject to police action. Professional boxing has been forbidden altogether in many states.

Restrictive public opinion in relation to amusement parks finds expression through police control and sometimes through the license system if they are within the city limits. Race track gambling is largely prohibited by law.

## *Constructive Action: Efforts to Provide for the Free Development of Athletics; Substitutes for Commercial Amusement Resorts*

Constructive public opinion has long been at work in the establishment of public parks and playgrounds, springing originally out of a desire to beautify the cities, and to relieve the evils of congestion. As a recreation movement it is now becoming conscious of its significance in the general reconstruction of city life. We have already splendid examples of public parks with playgrounds and recreation centers, properly supervised, that are able to compete effectively with commercial amusement resorts, and to provide for free and wholesome expressions of the spirit of play. The significance of these developments can hardly be over-estimated. Open air, sunlight, and a place to play, bring social and spiritual gifts as surely as they bring physical releases.

The social and recreation centers, both in parks and schoolhouses, are rapidly carrying us forward toward new expressions of democracy. Their significance, and the value of the supervised recreation conducted in them, grows each year more apparent. The vast process of social education is largely dependent upon organized recreation, and social education in cities is finding an open space, a standing ground, and a rallying point in public parks and playgrounds. They supply a physical base on which neighborhood consciousness and cooperation may develop. They supply facilities for carrying out a city's recreation program, and are more and more systematically developed as the cities become more awake to their value. 342 cities in the United States and Canada were reported in 1913 to be maintaining 2,402 regularly supervised playgrounds and recreation centers, at a total expenditure of $5,700,223.81, and to be employing 6,318 workers. These and like provisions mean that the cities are making increasing provision for the outdoor activities of young people as well as children, and seeking to show them a better way than that into which commercial amusement

enterprises now allure them in countless numbers. Society must not only restrict and repress the evil features of amusement offerings; it must let loose the springs of joy and gladness in a thousand natural ways for these young people under wholesome conditions.

This requires not only the provision of ample public facilities for outdoor recreation, but also fidelity to the principle that athletic games shall not be played merely to win nor as an end in themselves. A deeper need of society is met when play in all its forms is made to serve as a means to all-round health, development, and happiness; when it is made to stimulate and unify community life. The end of athletics is more than hard muscles and physical health, more than winning games or developing a few star players; it is nothing less than a broad service to citizenship, to the larger social needs of all the people.

With city congestion as serious as it is, and the exploitation of happiness what it is, society must increasingly fulfil its duty to utilize to their utmost the places already provided, in order that youth may come into its rightful heritage. This means not only the full social use of all parks and playgrounds as now established, but also more recreation centers, especially devised to meet the needs of young people, recreation piers, baths and bathing beaches, skating rinks, playing fields, theaters for amateurs, and assembly halls.

The recreation movement recognizes, however, that it is not enough to provide these places and leave the young people to frequent them without guidance in the pleasures which develop there. The supervision of activities that go on is, after all, the essential element, without which the facilities provided are often worse than wasted. Only as counsellors and play leaders of tact and wisdom, men and women of rich personality, are brought into touch with young people, will recreation be sure to bring youth out into a rich maturity. Only thus will the "upper ends" of play bear fruit in citizenship and community spirit. It is this high quality of play leadership which, in the actual outworking of the recreation

movement, will largely determine the effectiveness of public facilities for recreation in competition with commercial amusement resorts and parks. If the best public opinion and moral responsibility can actually control the supervision of these facilities and take the lead in public recreation, then low commercial offerings can either be driven out of business or forced to raise their standards.

The Playground and Recreation Association of America renders a national service in working for the full ideal of recreation. It cooperates in making recreation surveys of cities, in fostering the establishment of comprehensive systems of recreation, in locating play-leaders and supervisors, in giving general information about recreation and in stimulating public interest in all related questions.

Twenty-six organizations in New York, with some of which recreation is only an incidental purpose, are cooperating in the Recreation Alliance of New York City. It is prophetic of the cooperative action of the future. It seeks to serve as a center of intercommunication for the various organizations interested in recreation in New York City.

Constructive public opinion, persistent and effective, is now fighting out on such lines as these the question whether wholesome amusement, under reasonable guidance, can be made to "go" with young people under the abnormal conditions of city life; whether professional, commercial, and immoral influences have gained the mastery or whether this great and beautiful portion of life can be restored to a free and spontaneous expression, that it, in turn, may lead the way to the highest values. Public morality is at stake in this struggle, and is to be reckoned as a value not less sacred, surely, than public health or safety.

## *Special Amusement Events: Restrictive Action*

Special amusement events, such as holidays, excursions, and the circus, require extraordinary alertness on the part of the police and other restrictive agencies of government.

Special provisions and safeguards are made against dangers or evils likely to emerge upon such occasions.

### *Constructive Action*

The charm of the special day devoted to happiness is deeply significant in our civic life. It answers one of the oldest needs of man, and of none more than the men and women working at high speed in mechanical drudgery for long hours of daily labor. It is this which lends to the observance of Sunday an intense significance in an industrial social order. Just as there is no exploitation of pleasure more iniquitous than the exploitation of holidays, there is no movement of constructive public opinion more beneficent than that for the worthy celebration of holidays, the movement for community festivals, field days, fairs, and pageants.

The emotional life of the race cannot be registered by the time-clock at the factory gate. It floods the free spaces of the day, the week, and suffuses every holiday. It is this that makes them holy days. Those who capture the holidays of men for clean and wholesome pleasures, strike a body-blow at commercialism and vice. It is, therefore, highly significant that the festival holiday movement has rapidly spread in recent years and won for itself an enduring place among effective social agencies.

The insane Fourth has rapidly given way to the sane. The celebration of the day has become enriched as a civic festival incorporating many forms of public recreation and noble demonstrations of patriotism.

The distinctive values of Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Washington's and Lincoln's Birthday, Memorial Day, and others variously celebrated, give to the year no small portion of its national sentiment. Worthy celebrations of all these days are a primary duty of public opinion in every community in the land.

How many beautiful values can be made to live for all mankind by gaily marching children, by youths contending in

athletic games, by maidens winding round the Maypole, by lively music quickening and dissolving the quaint formations of the folk dances, by free families released to wander with romping children through the parks or over the green of the countryside? What sacred yearnings in the Nation's heart may not be stirred by reverent celebration of her dead? What daring hopes of men may yet be freed by rockets blazing skyward in the night? Who yet has told the Nation all the values of her holidays?

The movement for festival pageants came to us from England, where they were revived in 1905. It has rapidly spread throughout the Nation, quickening civic enthusiasm, and revealing unused resources for the celebration of local and national holidays. Among the early pageants in the smaller cities and villages were those at Bronxville, New York; Gloucester, Massachusetts; New Britain, Connecticut; Thetford and St. Johnsburg, Vermont; Ripon, Wisconsin; and Evanston, Illinois. Notable among the pageants in larger cities have been those in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Brooklyn, and Milwaukee. Perhaps the most spectacular of all was the Hudson-Fulton Celebration at New York in 1912.

Pageantry also played a notable part in the Alaska-Yukon Exposition, and will be a conspicuous feature of the Panama Exposition in San Francisco in 1915.

Three facts are of special significance in the relation of the pageant to the amusement problem. First, its reliance upon a large body of amateurs, under the direction of professional trainers but not supplanted by them. Second, its freedom from the commercial motive, the returns above expenses being used ordinarily for community interests; and third, its inherently moral atmosphere. It may well stand as our best illustration of the highest type of organized play.

The social values of pageantry are many and far-reaching. Beside the enduring memory of beautiful pictures, a new pride in local history is awakened, and this in turn brings community interest and loyalty. Prejudice and social cleavage give way to neighborly feelings. The participation of hun-

dreds of people in the acting brings a new sense of the value of cooperative community action. The participation of school children has high educational value in its training of artistic expression.

Like all other forms of art, pageantry serves to interpret life as a whole, and in an age predominantly social, an art so essentially social as pageantry must have fundamental significance. It quickens appreciation of all the poetry of life—so sadly neglected in America—and deepens the spiritual significance of historic events and national memories.

## *City Departments of Recreation*

"We continually forget how new the modern city is and how short the span of time in which we have assumed that we can eliminate from public life public recreation. The Greeks and Romans held games to be an integral part of patriotism. It would be interesting to trace how far this thoughtless conclusion (that the modern city need not provide recreation) is responsible for the vicious excitements and trivial amusements which in a modern city so largely take the place formerly supplied by public recreation and manly sports. It would be illuminating to know the legitimate connection between lack of public facilities for decent pleasures and our present social immoralities." [1]

In the spirit of these words, constructive public opinion is active in the establishment of city departments of recreation, coordinate with other branches of city government. A few cities have already established such departments and there is now a rapidly developing extension of this movement. If these departments are put under the supervision of men and women who, on the one hand, recognize the social and moral enormity of much that is now urged upon young people under amusement labels, and who, on the other hand, have an unshakable faith in the young people who pass under their supervision, we may expect far-reaching results.

[1] C. R. Henderson, "Preventative Agencies and Methods," p. 380, quoting Miss Jane Addams.

What large results may the public expect from the establishment of recreation departments in city governments? Our study would lead us to hope that they might serve the double need for restrictive and constructive action.

First, there should be such regulation of commercial enterprises as will make impossible the glaring evils now associated with many of them; an immediate result to be desired—restrictive action on a high level of intelligence, artistic taste, and moral dignity.

Second, there should be such a far-reaching constructive program as will include the provision and use of adequate facilities for public recreation, and its sympathetic supervision. This may rightly be expected.

May we not look to city departments of recreation for civic theaters expressive of our common life? May we not look to them for social and recreation centers wisely supervised? May we not look to them for the fostering of universal athletics? May we not look to them for the provision and utilization of public parks and playing fields, little and large? May we not look to them for worthy pageants and public festivals? *We may, if we look to ourselves for these things after the fashion of a democracy.*

We may indeed rightly expect them to take the lead in the high art of social education—the stimulation of common action and community consciousness. If they are well administered, they may make no less a contribution to our common life than is now being made by those responsible for formal education. They will be dealing with equally significant activities of the human spirit, and may guide it to joyous releases by the unifying power of organized recreation. They may, if they will, lead the way to the new city state, to the day of free cities, outshining those of ancient Greece, in which the uses of leisure shall be no less effective than the uses of labor in the service of the common good.

## *Suggestions for Local Action*

In view of these splendid measures already under way,

what shall be the program of Christian citizens in any community in working out the great fundamental principles of Jesus? What specifically can be done in "our town" on the different phases of the problem? In every community there is a situation to be met rather than a theory to be applied. The national solution of the problem will be effective only through local action determined upon and carried through by little groups of interested men and women who set themselves to community betterment.

## *The Situation as a Whole*

It is essential to remember that a most fundamental solution of this problem, locally as well as nationally, lies in the adoption of the gospel of wholesome play, in the full development of private recreation as over against public—private in the sense that the crowd is avoided, that commercialized attractions are shunned and reliance placed upon plays and games in which personal skill, initiative, wit, and originality count.

It is even more essential to remember that Christianity makes its basic contribution in the establishment throughout the community of those fundamental principles of Jesus which ought to govern personal recreation. Only as individuals bring all their dramatic amusement choices to the test of Jesus' principles of the Guarded Eye and Ear, Purity of Heart and the Truth-About-Life, will the highest types of dramatic recreation be achieved. Only as young people embody in all their social amusements the high principles of Reverence for Personality, Clean and Reverent Speech, Self-Control, and the Sacredness of Friendship, will these recreations be put on the highest level and the social impulses find their highest expression. Only as athletics are actually dominated by principles of Honesty, Freedom from Recklessness and Cupidity, Self-Control and Forgiveness, and Freedom from Brutality, will friendly athletics fulfil their beneficent function. Only as Independence and Personal

Integrity are actually matched by individuals to crowd contagion; only as Preparedness and Reserve Power are ready for times of special temptation, and the Sabbath made to function to that end as a high day of refreshment, will the community be free from contagious infections of evil spreading from special amusement places and events.

The building of all these fundamental principles into the very sub-structure of community life is the business, most of all, of the home and the church. However well they do this work, there will yet be much to do on the public problem which Christians may not ignore if we have correctly understood the principles of Jesus. Any group of Christian people who desire to cooperate in the improvement of local conditions will need to get at the facts of their own situation and awaken an intelligent and determined public conscience. This may be done by wise investigation and publicity.

Some such restrictive and constructive forms of action as the following may thus be worked out. These are only a few suggestions among the many that might be made, and are set down as illustrative only of what is being done, and may be done, by groups of people who approach the problem from many and varied points of view. The individual student must determine for himself the degree to which they are Christian and merit his support.[1]

## *The Dramatic Group: Restrictive Action*

An amicable understanding with a theater manager may be secured in an effort to eliminate an offensive play, or plays.

An appeal may be made to the mayor or chief of police to enforce the law. One difficulty involved in taking direct action against a particular theatrical production is that publicity follows, and attracts a certain type of public, so that

[1] For help on local problems correspond with the Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1 Madison Ave., New York City; The Recreation Department of the Russell Sage Foundation, 130 E. 22nd St., New York City, or other agencies mentioned in this chapter.

audiences often increase and little or nothing is accomplished. Action covering more than one production is essential.

An appeal may be made to the district attorney to bring suit. The end sought in this action is usually the revocation of the license and the punishment of the responsible persons.

An effort may be made to secure the establishment of a bureau of licenses having control over this and other phases of the problem. Efforts may be made to secure more adequate inspection and enforcement of law in case such a bureau is already established.

In relation to motion pictures, a local censorship board may be established by joint action of the various managers, the city government, and interested citizens.

Public support may be enlisted for the passing of such measures as that eliminating vaudeville from motion picture shows, young children from participation in theatrical productions, and similar reforms.

### *Constructive Action*

The production of the best plays only, in commercial theaters, may be fostered by the Drama League or similar plan, and dramatic taste may be cultivated by lectures and discussions.

Amateur theatricals may be developed through dramatic reading circles, and the acting of original plays or those by the best dramatists.

Interest in an endowed theater for amateurs may be quickened.

The educational uses of motion pictures may be magnified, and their use extended to churches, schools, and parks.

### *The Social Rendezvous Group: Restrictive Action*

Cooperation may be secured by a group of citizens with the management of a public dance hall, café with amusement features, or other institutions of this group to preserve better order, eliminate the sale of liquor to minors or in places where

it is forbidden by law, prevent immoral dancing, gambling, and soliciting by immoral women or men, and other similar reforms.

An appeal may be made to the mayor, chief of police, or other officials, to enforce the law or city ordinances in respect to evils arising in places of this type.

An appeal may be made to the district or city attorney to bring suit.

### *Constructive Action*

Support may be given to restaurants and cafés which do not offer unwholesome amusement features.

Full support may be given to all such institutions as churches, social settlements, Christian Associations, lodges, and social clubs, which maintain a high grade social life of their own. Nothing is more needed perhaps in the average community than to vivify the social life of the church, to make it inviting, free-spirited, and controlling.

Selective social life upon high levels and in good surroundings may be fostered among all groups of young people in the community.

The use of public halls may be rendered unnecessary by the provision and group use of social centers and other facilities.

### *The Athletic Group: Restrictive Action*

The cooperation of captains, officials, and members of teams may be secured in the elimination of rough and unfair play, the use of professionals in amateur games, and betting.

The cooperation of spectators may be secured in the elimination of discourtesies to visiting teams and similar forms of bad conduct.

City and state officials may be invoked to enforce the laws against gambling and prize-fighting. Public pressure may be brought to bear upon them in the ways already suggested.

### *Constructive Action*

Amateur athletics of all kinds under wise supervision may be organized among the young people of the community with great effect.

The full use of public parks and playing fields, gymnasiums, bathing beaches and the like, may be fostered by making them easily accessible to all who would use them.

Enthusiasm for all forms of outdoor sports may be developed by volunteer and professional play leaders, and a policy of "athletics for all" may be developed.

Cooperation may be offered in securing only the highest grade men for coaches, trainers, and officials at games.

### *Special Amusement Places: Restrictive Action*

The cooperation of the owners and managers of amusement parks may be secured by fully acquainting them with existing evils. The restriction of evil practices may thus be secured.

An appeal may be made to city or county officials to enforce the law against those responsible for drunkenness, gambling, and vice.

An appeal may be made to the city or district attorney to bring suit against the management and seek the closing of the enterprise.

### *Constructive Action*

The larger provision, and social use of public parks, playgrounds, and playing fields may be fostered.

The full support and commendation of the well-run commercial enterprise may add to its power in competition with loosely conducted resorts.

The improvement of sites of natural beauty may be carried forward at public expense or by private benefaction, and their use made popular.

### *Special Amusement Events: Restrictive Action*

The cooperation of those promoting amusement events may be secured by a group of citizens, and evil features obviated by careful provisions made in advance.

The police and other city officials may be forewarned concerning doubtful projects.

Detectives may be employed to secure evidence for later use in prosecutions.

### *Constructive Action*

The community may be educated to a full appreciation of the field day, pageant, sane Fourth, and similar celebrations.

A group of citizens may undertake small celebrations and work up to the preparation of a festival pageant.

Leaders in country districts may attain large results by arranging a field day. An "Old Home Week" helps community spirit.

### *City Departments of Recreation*

All efforts for sustained public action may be made to converge toward the establishment of such a department. Public approval energized by the highest ideals is essential for their full success.

### *The Amusement Problem Can be Solved*

The Christian men and women of America can solve the amusement problem if they will. The moral issues are clear. The principles of Jesus for personal and public action are manifest. Working solutions have already proved effective. In every community the duty of action is urgent. The millions of Christian men and women in America, old and young, can revolutionize present conditions if they will. Christianity bids every individual to do his part.

## *The Final Contribution of Christianity*

What has Christianity to say finally to one who tries to incorporate the principles of Jesus in his personal life and seems to fail? This above other things. Principles are not wrought into life piecemeal. The whole-hearted devotion of oneself in service to Him who personified these principles will catch a man's life up into that living friendship with Christ which guides to victory.

What has Christianity to say to those who have engaged in many efforts to establish public righteousness and apparently failed? The word of Jesus is never more beautiful and compelling than when it comes to men and women who have done their utmost in his service without visible result, even as he himself seemed to have failed on that last night of his life. To these he brings a deep assurance of the final triumph of the good. He brings the sense of certainty that whatever the plottings of evil men, whatever the tragic ignorance and frailty of youth, whatever the unanswered cravings of the human heart for happiness, he has himself in his life, his teachings, and his living presence, given full answer to all apparent failure. They who share his purpose for the life of the world can still surely know that whatever happens to their individual lives, the mighty power of the Everlasting God is bound to go on achieving the Christian social order. They do not serve alone—the Sense of His Presence is the final gift. He gives assurance of final victory, the certainty that righteousness will yet be established.

## Daily Readings

1. How can these principles be brought to bear on the main source of evil in the public problem in our town?

> Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves

break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. . . . No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Matt. 6: 19-24.

What reconstructions do these words involve?

2. Paul's letter to the Philippians reveals the unity of the struggle for personal and public righteousness.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing affrighted by the adversaries: which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation, and that from God; because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.—Phil. 1: 27-30.

3. And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. . . . And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give. . . . But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.—Matt. 10: 1, 7, 8, 19, 20.

Evidently this was not to be an isolated group of Jesus' disciples. They were but the first of many bands bravely

going forth on his beneficent work. To all those who labor to establish righteousness he promises the presence of the Spirit.

4. When men come to practical measures for establishing righteousness in community life, their views and methods are apt to vary. To those in such a situation the word of Jesus comes.

> A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.—John 13:34, 35.

> John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us.—Mark 9:38-40.

5. The continuing sources of power must be found by those who would do continuous service for public righteousness.

> And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?—Luke 11:9-13.

6. Sooner or later the battle for the establishment of right-

eousness involves a cross. What spirit turns a cross into a victory?

> And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. And there was also a superscription over him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.—Luke 23:33-38.

7. "Be of good cheer."

> In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father. . . . These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.—John 16:26-28, 33.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

*What are the most aggravated amusement evils in our town?* Which can best be met by restrictive action? Which by constructive action?

Upon what social measures shall we focus our attention?

*What shall be our specific local program of improvements?*

From what state or national organizations can we secure help through correspondence, visiting investigators, speakers, advisers, literature?

*Through what existing local institutions can most effective work be done?*

What are the special opportunities of the churches and closely allied organizations? What specific things can we do in and through them?

How can our homes contribute more largely to the improvement of conditions?

What can we do to foster the "make your own fun" type of play?

What can we do through social centers in school houses or elsewhere?

What can we do through movements working without institutional equipment such as holiday celebrations, community festivals, and pageants?

In what ways could we make progress in the direction of a department of recreation in our town or city government?

Are we willing to back our own program to the limit?

*What grounds are there for believing in the ultimate triumph of the good despite setbacks and temporary failures? How and when shall we look to God for strength and guidance?*

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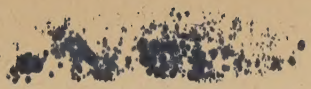

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